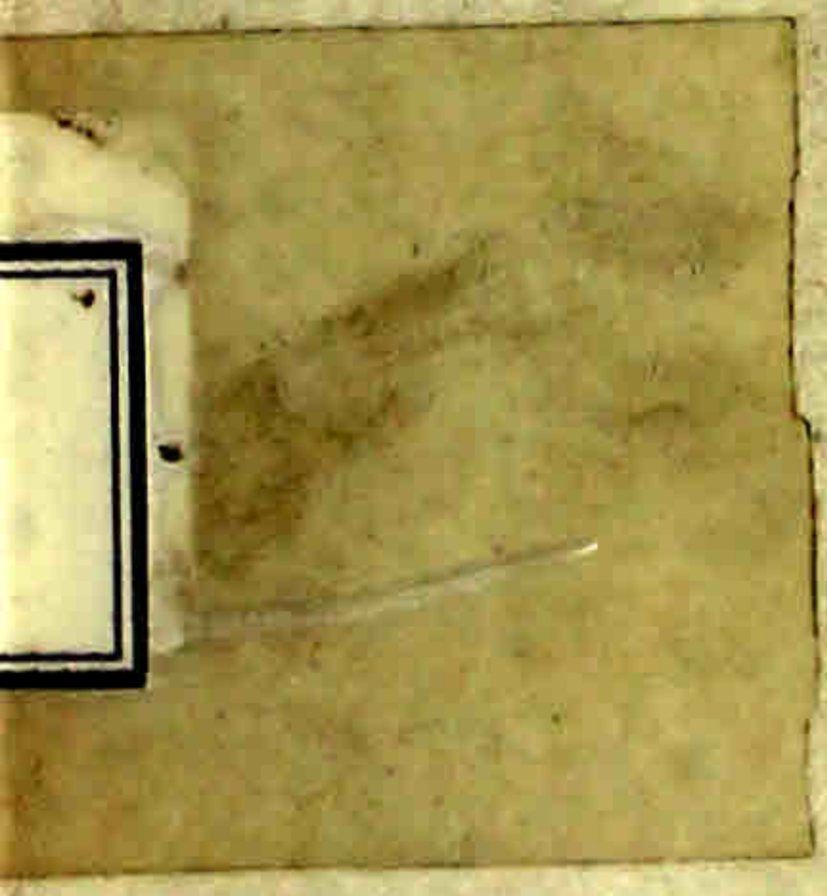
THE LIVES OF THE BUDDHA IN THE ART AND LITERATURE OF ASIA

Mary Cummings



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"*Mahâ Parinibbâna Suttanta:* The Book of the Great Decease." In *Dialogues of the Buddha*, vol. 2, translated from the Pāli of the *Dīgha-nikāya* by T. W. Rhys Davids and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, pp. 78-191. London and Oxford: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1910. 4th. rev. ed. London: Luzac and Co. for the Pali Text Society, 1959. Excerpts on pages 202-208 and 211 reprinted courtesy of the Oxford University Press.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some years ago, Walter Spink, my professor in the History of Art Department at the University of Michigan, asked if I would be interested in researching "verbal-visual" imagery on some phase of Indian art. For the study, which immediately caught my interest, I chose the theme "The Lives of the Buddha," comparing its use in literature and in art. This book is the final development of my research.

I would like to thank the Asian Art faculty of the University of Michigan and also Professor Thomas Trautmann and the CSSEAS staff for their support in bringing this study to publication. Thanks also to the friends and colleagues who provided photographs; special thanks in this regard to Forrest McGill. I am grateful also to my father, Paul Cummings, for assistance with photographs.

Bob Del Bonta has kindly standardized the Sanskrit spellings in this book and also Sanskritized Pāli terms where a Sanskrit equivalent exists. Anyone familiar with the chaotic varieties of old and new transliterations understands the value of this task!

To Mary Pfender and Marie Martin, who have worked so diligently as editors, I am most grateful. Thanks are also in order to Carole Wolkan, who accurately and conscientiously typed the text, and to Janet Opdyke for editorial assistance in the final stages. Very special thanks to Walter Spink for thoughtful suggestions on the manuscript, and for all the many efforts on my behalf. And to my husband, Tom Breitenbucher, whose inspiration and tenderness have helped so much, this book is dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

During the sixth century B.C., in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal, there lived a prince named Siddhārtha Gautama. He was of unusual sensitivity, greatly troubled by the enigmas and conditions of human life. Not only suffering, decay, and death, but also rebirth oppressed him. For it is a central concept in Indian thought that all beings are reincarnated after death, being reborn in some better or worse state, depending upon the actions of their last and all of their former lives. This "wheel of life" seemed to him, in itself, to be tyrannical and spiritually meaningless. For the religious man, an endless succession of lives, if led in blindness and delusion, is eternal torment. It became the goal of Siddhārtha Gautama to personally break this cycle by achieving Enlightenment, or ultimate insight into the nature of existence.

After many years of inner spiritual concentration and meditation, Siddhārtha reached his goal of Enlightenment. By drawing upon the merit accumulated from deeds of his present and former lives he made a decisive spiritual breakthrough, becoming the Buddha, or "the Awakened One." He then commenced a career as a great teacher and became the founder of a religion which spread far beyond its native land and profoundly affected all of Asia. At the close of his life, he reached a state of total release and wisdom beyond conceptualization. Rebirth for him was no longer necessary, since the purpose of life is to discover itself, and in that he had totally succeeded. Though he is a supreme example, the Buddha's accomplishment must not be regarded as unique; at least in theory, Enlightenment is possible for all beings, though it may require many, many rebirths.

Normally, we do not recall our former lives, but, according to tradition, during the night in which he gained Enlightenment and Buddhahood, Siddhārtha became conscious of all his previous existences:

> And having attained the highest mastery in all kinds of meditation, he remembered . . . the continuous

series of all his former births.

"In such a place I was so and so by name, and from thence I passed and came hither," thus he remembered his thousands of births, experiencing each as it were over again.

And having remembered each birth and each death in all those various transmigrations, the compassionate one then felt compassion for all living beings.[1]

This study will relate various stories and episodes of the Buddha's many incarnations, including his final one, as they appear in the literature and art of Asia. On the one hand, they represent a vital interest in the Buddha as a teacher and example of righteous behavior, which is central to Hīnayāna, or Theravāda [Doctrine of the elders], Buddhism. On the other hand, the miraculous content of so many of these stories reveals an aspect of the other main branch of Buddhism, Mahāyāna [The great vehicle] Buddhism.

The stories about the past lives of the Buddha are called Jātakas, or "Birth Stories." It is believed by Buddhists that the Buddha told these stories as lessons to his followers during his years of ministry. In the Jātakas the Buddha is called the "Bodhisattva," a term signifying he who is destined for Enlightenment but has not yet achieved it.

The Jātaka stories were developed over many centuries. Some were told long before the time of the Buddha and later adapted by Buddhist monks to help teach their doctrine by means of old, familiar illustrations. The monks came from all social classes. Many knew popular fables of clever and kindly animals, or foolish and wise men. Some could tell of exploits of heroes in magical realms. Some could sing ballads and recite poetry from ancient romances or recount sacred legends of the Brahmans and hermits.[2] These tales were all gathered together to become the first Buddhist Jātakas. Other Jātakas developed later in Buddhism's history and emphasized the great mercy of the Bodhisattva: a theme of particular importance to the emerging Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Buddhist teachers incorporated into the Jātaka collection everything that pleased them and their audience, whether it had a profound or a contrived relationship to Buddhism (Winternitz 1933[2]:125-26). It is thus not surprising that the term "Jātaka" apparently originally simply meant "story" or "tale." Only after several centuries of Buddhism's development did these stories come to be considered as the collected previous lives of the Buddha.[3] Originally, they were utilized as parables and illustrations of the lessons taught by the Buddha. But, at least by the second or third century A.D., as in the Avadāna books (see below), the

Jātaka stories came to be regarded as a collection of the previous-life stories of the Buddha.

The main body of Jātaka literature is *The Jātaka*, or stories of the Buddha's previous births, a collection of 547 tales in prose and verse. It was written in Pāli, an ancient Indian language and the language of the first sacred books of Buddhism. There are a number of other surviving Jātaka collections, most notably the Sanskrit *Jātakamālā* [Garland of Jātakas] by Āryaśūra. These are less lengthy than *The Jātaka*. Part One of this book, which is devoted to Jātakas, will draw from these and a wide variety of other literary and artistic sources.

Out of the vast body of Jātaka literature, chaotic though it often is, it is possible to discern certain major themes and types. Five of the most representative types of Jātaka have been chosen for Part One of this book. In the first section, three pre-Buddhist animal fable Jātakas are compared and related to their later Buddhist context. Section 2 relates one of the heroic adventure tales so popular in Indian literature; Jātakas of renunciation are the topic of section 3. The fourth section relates two Jātakas of heroic and holy animals. The fifth and final section discusses four Jātakas exemplifying the Mahāyānist virtues of total charity and generosity. Between the secular, sharp-edged humor of the animal fables in section 1 and the highly sentimental, pious illustrations of Mahāyānist virtues in section 5, Buddhism and its Jātaka stories span a great range, both in historical development and in the emotive qualities they express.

Part Two of this book describes the major events of the life of the Buddha as they appear in Asian art and literature. Unlike the Jātakas, which are a diverse group of tales thought by many Buddhists to describe the good works of the Bodhisattva (a term for the Buddha before his Enlightenment) in his previous lives, the events chronicled in Part Two are those of a single lifetime: i.e., the final incarnation of the man who became the Buddha. About the Buddha's actual life we know little, but a wealth of pseudohistorical religious literature grew up in the centuries after his death. Our accounts are drawn from a variety of ancient texts, most notably the *Buddhacarita* by Aśvaghoṣa, the *Lalitavistara*, *Mahāvastu*, and *Nidānakathā*. Immediately apparent to the reader is the blend of the miraculous with the rationally plausible, and the florid with the straightforward. These texts evolved over a period of many centuries and their many-layered textures reveal a wide variety of religious tastes and traditions.

As you read these narratives, with all their seeming contradictions and exaggerations, please keep in mind that a great, enduring religion, as opposed to a cult, must appeal to and meet the needs of a wide variety of people. To do that, its teachings, images, and scriptures must function on several different levels. It must

be intellectually satisfying, as well as spiritually fulfilling, to the religious thinker and scholar. It must allow the mystics--the religious geniuses--to energize the traditions, while also finding a place for the simple piety of the common man. It must provide moral guidance for all and show the faithful the way to live. Its ecclesiastics moderate and care for the whole of the community and institution; even this governing body is composed of all types of people. In a major religion all of these blend together and form an organism which in the ideal seems to offer each individual an approach to God and a way of life sanctioned by a great tradition.

The Buddha was a mystic, a thinker, and a compelling teacher. Both he and his leading followers must have had insight into the pietistic and devotional needs of the common man. They must also have been aware of the means of constructing an enduring religious organization. Thus, the legends on the previous lives (Jātakas) and final life of the Buddha became vehicles to confirm and cement the faith, to sing the praises of the Buddha, who is at once teacher, savior, and supreme God. On an official level they are, with all the other sacred books and imagery, part of the repository of spiritual memories of the faith. These narratives have helped preserve the memory of the founder and have been important in various ways to many sects of Buddhism. Their significance as religious expression, as well as folklore, makes the lives of the Buddha a worthy study.

The Texts

Most of the major Jātaka and Life of the Buddha texts have been translated into European languages; all of our selections are drawn from English translations. A study of these texts is fascinating to the student of early and comparative literature.

The Jātakas

The oldest Jātaka collection, or collections, probably consisted only of verses (*gāthās*).[4] Most scholars agree that only the *gāthās*, as opposed to the combined *gāthās* and prose which we have in *The Jātaka*, can claim ancient and canonical authority and be regarded as documents of about the third century B.C. or earlier. But some *gāthās* were written at the same time as the prose sections with which they are paired (Winternitz 1928:2). And, because many of the tales represented in *The Jātaka* also had a pre-Buddhist existence as free-form prose and oral literature, it is likely that some form of prose commentary or elaboration was added to the verses not long after the canonical verse book was compiled (Cowell 1895[1]:x). Thus, dating of verse and of prose sections in Jātaka

tales can be difficult, even though most of the core originally was in verse, and the verses often have an archaic flavor. A single Jātaka story may have sections varying greatly in date.

The Jātaka as it exists today dates from the fifth century A.D., but, as described above, parts of both its prose Commentary and its verses considerably predate the fifth century A.D. The great Buddhist scholar, Buddhaghosa, is said to have compiled this series of books, but it seems more likely that it was the work of an unknown group of monks from Ceylon (Winternitz 1933[2]:116; also "The Jātakam of the Canon" 1883-84:145-48). It is called a Commentary because it adds to and embellishes with prose a sacred verse text. This Commentary, *The Jātaka*, is a huge narrative work, the full title of which is the *Jātakaṭṭhavaṇṇanā* [Elucidation on the meaning of the Jātakas] (Winternitz 1933[2]:116). The compilers took their materials from an earlier Commentary on the Jātakas, the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*. The *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* consisted of both prose and verse. The prose of the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* was translated into Old Singhalese, the language of Ceylon, when it was brought to Ceylon from northern India, but the verses, regarded as more ancient and sacred, were never translated from the Pāli and thus retained more of the original qualities of the ancient literature than did the prose (Winternitz 1928:12-13).

Thus, in some Jātakas, *gāthās* and prose form a homogeneous whole, while in many others the prose is repetitious or contradictory to the verses, indicating a difference in date and authorship (see the "Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka" below). There are some Jātakas which from the beginning were prose stories with only one or a few verses containing either the moral or the gist of the tale. In these cases it is likely that the compiler has more or less preserved the old prose story (see the "Makhādeva Jātaka" below). There are other Jātakas which still retain their ballad quality with dialogue verses and narrative stanzas conveying the story well, with no need of additional narrative in the form of prose (see the "Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla Jātaka" below).

Each story in *The Jātaka* opens with a preface called the "story of the present," relating a situation encountered by the Buddha or one of his followers which prompts the Buddha to tell the birth-story as an anecdote or parable to the current situation. This is followed by the story proper ("story of the past") in prose and verse. The Jātaka concludes with the Buddha drawing a moral from the tale, as well as providing an identification of the actors in the story with their present births at the time of his discourse.[5] It is interesting to note the contrasting literary styles of the preface, prose section, verse section, and conclusion. Because in so many Jātakas the elements were composed at different times and then grafted together by the compilers, *The Jātaka* abounds in gaps, repetitions, and inconsistencies which often make it difficult to read. Therefore, most of the selections used in this book are only from the body of the Jātaka itself.

Unlike *The Jātaka*, the Sanskrit *Jātakamālā* [Garland of Jātakas] was written by a single author: Āryaśūra. His dates are uncertain, but the work probably could not have been written before the second century A.D. or later than the fourth century A.D.[6] The work is a free-form poetic rendition of the sacred stories; Āryaśūra drew from ancient and varied sources, including many of *The Jātaka*'s sources, but coordinated the elements into a unified, flowing style. In its florid, rhapsodic language it expresses the spirit of the new, emerging form of Buddhism (Mahāyāna) which developed out of the original Hīnayāna (Theravāda) mode of Buddhism. Most of his stories are also found in *The Jātaka*, but the simplicity which characterizes Hīnayānist and Pāli work is not evident. Āryaśūra's work abounds in flowery description, elaborate sermons, vivid characterization, and elegant narration, but these are always in harmony with the scheme of the whole and the emotive nature of the contents.[7]

Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* was a great favorite in India. Among the paintings in the famous caves of Ajantā there are scenes from the *Jātakamālā* with inscribed passages from Āryaśūra's work (Nariman 1919:44). The entire series of thirty-four Jātakas in the *Jātakamālā* is sculpted on the first gallery at Borobuḍur in Java.[8]

Besides *The Jātaka* and Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, various other books contain Jātaka stories. Excerpts from some of these will be included in our selection of Jātakas.

The *Cariyapiṭaka* [Collection of good existences] contains thirty-five Jātakas, though it probably was to have contained more. It is part of the Pāli Canon, and is based on *The Jātaka*, though its chief concern is with bringing out moral lessons and it thus lacks much of the humor and the rambling quality of *The Jātaka*. It draws from *The Jātaka* to describe the births in which the Bodhisattva developed the Perfections (Pāramitās) necessary in his striving to become a Buddha (De 1951:6-8; on the Pāramitās, see Dayal 1932:165-78, 193-248).

Another Pāli text, the *Dhammapada Commentary*, or *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, encompasses a great variety of Jātakas but is not exclusively a Jātaka book. Many other Pāli texts contain some Jātakas as well.[9] The Sanskrit *Mahāvastu* [The book of the great events] is primarily an account of the life of the Buddha, but also includes many Jātakas which the Buddha relates as parables. Most of the Jātakas in the various Pāli texts appear also in *The Jātaka*, though usually in a somewhat different form. The *Mahāvastu*, however, contains some Jātakas which do not appear to have parallels in the Pāli literature (Nariman 1919:15).

There are several extant works called "Jātakastava" [Praise of the Buddha's former births] and, like the "Jātakamālā" genre, there probably were once many more. One of these texts was written

in Sanskrit and is preserved in Tibet; the other exists in a Khotanese manuscript discovered at Tun-Huang in northern China. The *Jātakastava* of Jñānayaśas contains twenty short tales, most of which are highly sentimental stories of great self-sacrifice by the Bodhisattva (see the section "Giving of Life, Limb, and Loved Ones" below). The other *Jātakastava* manuscript, discovered at Tun-Huang, contains fifty stories, a great many of them also in the extremely sentimental vein of self-sacrifice. Both are told from the viewpoint of a worshipper recounting the previous deeds of the Bodhisattva which have earned him Buddhahood and the praise of men. The quality and selection of tales relates more to the *Jātakamālā* than to *The Jātaka*.

Many Jātaka tales are found in a related form of literature: the Avadāna Books. The word "Avadāna" means "significant deed." An Avadāna, like a Jātaka, generally consists of a story of the present (the occasion for telling the story of the past), a story of the past, and a moral. If the hero of the past is the Bodhisattva, then this kind of Avadāna is also called a Jātaka.[10]

Probably the oldest of the Avadāna Books, the Sanskrit *Avadānaśataka* [The hundred instructive stories] was written in the second century A.D.[11] Two of its ten sections relate Jātaka tales. The *Sūtralāṃkāra* [Sutra ornament] was also written in the second century A.D. It was probably by one Kumāralāta and originally bore the title *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* [A series of examples adorned by poetic invention], though the Chinese ascribed it to Aśvaghoṣa, the famous author of the *Buddhacarita*.[12] Both works were translated into Chinese at an early date: the *Avadānaśataka* at the beginning of the third century and the *Sūtralāṃkāra* in 405 A.D. (Winternitz 1933[2]:267, 279). Many texts were written subsequent to these and largely based upon them, i.e., the *Divyavadāna* [The heavenly stories] (Dayal 1932:383-84). In a late Avadāna text, the *Avadānakalpalatā* (*Bodhisattvavadānakalpalatā*) by the Kashmiri poet, Kṣemendra, completed in 1052 A.D., the Mahāyānist taste for tales of self-sacrifice is at a climax, with the moral meaning often very exaggerated and the language excessively ornate.[13]

Tales which appear in the Jātaka books are also frequently contained in non-Buddhist books, such as the *Pañchatantra* [The five books of stories] and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* [Ocean of streams of story]. Neither directly borrows from the other, but both the Jātaka texts and the Story books draw upon common sources (Speyer 1895:xxii). As we shall see, it is interesting to compare the Jātaka accounts with these non-Buddhist versions.

Life of the Buddha Episodes

As with the Jātaka stories, the earliest Life of the Buddha accounts were transmitted orally. It wasn't until long after the time of the Buddha that written records came into general use in India, though it is probable that from the seventh century B.C. onward written notes on palm leaves aided the memory. The Indian masters had in early times perfected methods of oral recitation for handing down literary traditions (Rhys Davids, T. W. 1971:112-18). We know that monks took great care to preserve the sacred teachings through memory; there are still traces of these oral methods and cues in Buddhist literature as it survives today. Stock phrases, metrical prose and verse, and recurring passages create a symmetry which, though tedious to the reader, would aid in exactness of recall for these holy words. Because such passages often seem insipid to the modern reader they have been omitted from our excerpts, though it is important to be aware of their existence and original function.

No single text describes all the major events in the life of the Buddha, and some treat certain episodes summarily, while dwelling on others at length. For this reason, selections in our book are drawn from a wide range of texts. The selections also reveal the variety in literary quality and style which characterize Buddhist literature.

Many texts have undoubtedly been lost through time, though, fortunately, several major texts, such as the *Buddhacarita* and *Lalitavistara*, survive. It is often not clear which text a visual monument followed, or even if its text survives at all. Borobudur in Java, whose Jātakas clearly depict the *Jātakamālā* and whose Life of the Buddha scenes follow the *Lalitavistara*, is a relatively rare case. But often a monument, especially in early Buddhist art, may not have followed a specific text at all but rather derives from a regional oral tradition.

There is considerable disagreement among scholars as to when a biography of the Buddha came into being. Some believe a comprehensive life story arose only by the second century A.D., but recent analysis points to a much earlier date. It is well known that the second portion of the Vinaya, one of the three divisions of the Pāli Canon, opens with a fragmentary account of the Buddha's life. This account is clearly ancient, probably dating in its main elements from the third century B.C.[14] Though it begins rather abruptly with the events following the Enlightenment, scholars long assumed that the account was complete (Winternitz 1933[2]:186). But the Vinaya portions in the Canons of several other Buddhist branches include a much more extensive version which would suggest that at one time the Vinaya contained a comprehensive biography. Also, many of the biographies which survive end at the point where the Pāli Vinaya account now begins.

These include the *Mahāvastu*, the *Lalitavistara*, and the *Nidānakathā*, which all conclude with the Enlightenment or with events in the early ministry. Possibly all of these accounts may be traced to a common ancient origin in the Vinaya and in the course of time they became independent and embellished by the various schools. The development of independent biographies could well have caused the original Vinaya account to partly crumble away (Frauwallner 1956:48-52; Kloppenborg 1973:xi-xiii).

But whatever their origin, whether a common one in the ancient Vinaya or in scattered and miscellaneous sources, the surviving Life of the Buddha accounts are distinctive and varied.

A number of partial biographies exist in the Pāli Tripiṭaka, which is now the Canon of the Theravāda Buddhists.[15] This Canon consists of three portions, or Piṭakas: the Vinaya [Rules of discipline], the Sūtra [Teachings], and the Abhidharma [Philosophical texts on the Sūtra teachings]. Several biographical passages from the *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga* of the Vinaya section and several from the *Dīghanikāya*, the *Majjhimanikāya*, and the *Khuddakanikāya* of the Sūtra section appear in our selections. Parts of these date from about the third century B.C., though there are also later additions (Winternitz 1933[2]:18). There is no comprehensive Life of the Buddha account in the Pāli Canon, though, as noted above, there may originally have been. The earliest surviving connected biography in Pāli is the *Nidānakathā* [Narrative of the beginnings]. It apparently was written in the fifth century A.D. to accompany *The Jātaka*, but it draws upon ancient sources in the Canon. Because of its late date and because it was written in the form of a Commentary to explain the ancient scriptures, it was not included in the Canon.

Contemporary with the *Nidānakathā* is the Pāli *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*. Like the *Nidānakathā*, it was written as a Commentary to expand upon a canonical text. In this case, however, its original model survives. The *Dhammapada* and its later Commentary are quite different. The *Dhammapada* is a simple collection of verses praising the Buddha and his doctrine, but its Commentary encompasses a huge collection of legends that relegates the exegesis of the actual *Dhammapada* to the background. In fact, it is more intimately related to *The Jātaka* than to any other book, including the *Dhammapada* upon which it claims to be based (*Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, pp. 27, 52, 57). Several Jātakas and Life of the Buddha episodes in our book are drawn from the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*.

Various other noncanonical Pāli Life of the Buddha accounts survive, mostly written between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. Our book includes selections from one of the more interesting of them, the *Jinacarita*, which appears to be based on the *Nidānakathā* (Winternitz 1933[2]:224; Banerji 1964:96-97). All of these, as with the fifth-century Pāli Commentaries, were composed in Ceylon.

Most of the remaining major Life of the Buddha texts are in Sanskrit, the other major language of Indian Buddhist literature. As with pre-fifth-century Pāli works, they were written in northern India, in the Ganges river valley, the general region where the Buddha lived and taught.

One of the earliest of these is the *Mahāvastu*, written in a "mixed" Sanskrit. It is a chaotic and often confusing work, including a wealth of Jātakas and Sūtras within the framework of the Buddha's life and teachings. Its composition appears to date from the third century B.C., but additions were made into the fourth century A.D. or even later (Dayal 1932:382). It is a canonical work, part of the Vinaya of the Lokottaravādin sect, incorporating both Hīnayānist and Mahāyānist views. There are close relationships between the *Mahāvastu* and the Pāli Vinaya, with a striking parallelism between the last fourth of the *Mahāvastu* and the opening chapters of the Pāli Vinaya's *Mahāvagga*. It also resembles the Pāli *Nidānakathā* in that it is in three sections: the lives of the Bodhisattvas from the distant past, the life of the Buddha to his Enlightenment, and the ministry and conversions.[16]

Perhaps the most famous and probably the most beautifully written Life of the Buddha account is the *Buddhacarita* [Acts of the Buddha]. It was composed by Aśvaghoṣa in the late first or second century A.D. and was enormously popular as poetry and for its value in explaining the tradition in simple terms. I Tsing, a seventh-century Chinese pilgrim to India, notes that the *Buddhacarita* was widely read and sung throughout India (Johnston 1936: xxxvi, xi). Sections of an original second-century A.D. *Buddhacarita* manuscript remain, though the complete work survives only in Tibetan and Chinese translations (Johnston 1936:xviii). Many selections of our book are drawn from the *Buddhacarita*.

Miraculous incidents and resplendent description are rarely stressed in the *Buddhacarita*. Such is not the case with another very popular and famous Life of the Buddha account: the *Lalitavistara* [Detailed account of the sports of the Buddha]. It characterizes the life of the Buddha on earth as the diversion of a supernatural being and thus reflects the emerging Mahāyānist emphasis on the divinity of the Buddha (Nariman 1919:19). Though parts of it preserve the ancient traditions of about the third century B.C., it dates in the main from the second to perhaps the sixth century A.D. (Dayal 1932:382; Nanjio 1933[?]:50-51). Representative sections from it are included in this volume.

Another interesting Life of the Buddha text is the *Catuṣparisatsūtra* [Sūtra on the foundation of the Buddhist Order]. It is an incomplete account, beginning at the Enlightenment, where the *Lalitavistara* ends. As noted above, the traditions which formed these two texts may once have been together in an early Vinaya. It retains the doctrinal terms and format of very ancient

scriptures, though the surviving versions probably date from the early centuries of our era. Since many manuscripts of this text have been discovered in Central Asia it must have been extremely popular in that region and in northern India (Kloppenborg 1973: xi-xii). A few passages from it are incorporated into this book.

As we have seen, most Jātakas and Life of the Buddha accounts originated in South Asia. But virtually all of them spread into East and Southeast Asia. Tibet and China are particularly important for aid in dating texts and for preserving accounts which have perished in the original language. One such text is the Japanese *Kako Genzai Inga Kyō* [The Sūtra of cause and effect]. An Indian monk translated it into Chinese in the early fifth century A.D. (Nanjio 1933[?], no. 666). The text is compiled from very ancient traditions. It enjoyed great popularity in China and Japan. The *Inga Kyō* manuscripts were perhaps unique in combining text with illustrations (Rosenfield and Shimada 1970:33). One such illustration appears in our selection in the Temptation episode.

Some texts originated in countries outside of South Asia. One Chinese text, the English title of which is *The Sūtra of the Forty-Two Sections*, appears to have been compiled by Indian missionaries sometime before the third century A.D. (Mukherji 1931:7-9). It is a sort of handbook on basic Buddhist traditions, including a portion on the early life of the Buddha.

Not all Jātaka and Life of the Buddha accounts originated in Asia, however. In the past several centuries, the West has become increasingly attracted to Buddhism. Scholarly literature abounds, as the field presents intellectual challenge. But the West has also been admiring of Buddhism in a more personal sense. One of the outcomes of this admiration is *The Light of Asia*, a quite lovely account of the Buddha's life written just over a hundred years ago by Sir Edwin Arnold (1879). It is not included in our book, but is significant in demonstrating that Buddhism is not so foreign or so distant as we might at first believe.

NOTES

1. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, p. 148, trans. Cowell. This particular section, however, was actually not written by Aśvaghoṣa but dates from the nineteenth century by a monk named Amritananda, who completed the lost portions of the Sanskrit original.

2. Winternitz 1933(2):125. All of these Jātaka types are represented in our selections.

3. De 1951:1. Most of De's book is devoted to proving this thesis. See also Speyer 1895:xxii.

4. Rhys Davids, T. W. 1971:196. The evidence for this is strong: the language of the verses is more archaic than the prose; it is easier to retain verse in its original form than prose; and the twenty-two books of *The Jātaka* are supposedly grouped according to the number of *gāthās* in each, though this arrangement no longer holds true in many cases of the prose-verse set.

   In an influential article, "The Prose-and-Verse Type of Narrative and the Jātakas," Hermann Oldenberg (1912) argued that the prose and verses formed an integral unit and were part of a common Indian literary tradition of such a merging. This theory is no longer generally accepted (see Winternitz 1928: 12).

5. Cowell 1895:ix; De 1951:xii. See also Feer 1875:20.

6. Speyer 1895:xxiv. Speyer's translation was drawn from three extant manuscripts of Āryaśūra's work (see p. xxii). The "Jātakamālā" is actually a class name: there were once others of this type and title, based upon sacred traditions and scriptures but shaped by the imagination of the author (see p. xxiii).

7. Speyer 1895:xxiv. This harmony is often not true of other books of Jātaka stories, particularly those written after Āryaśūra's work. These are characterized by an artificiality and ornamentation for its own sake.

8. Krom 1927(1):230-37, 312-16, 397-99. Not all the reliefs of Jātakas are based upon Āryaśūra's text, but a whole series follows the sequences of his tales.

9. For examples see the *Milindapañha*, the *Buddhavaṃsa* (De 1951), and the *Majjihimanikāya*. See also De 1951:2-3; see also "Jātakas of Renunciation," this volume.

10. Winternitz 1933(2):278; Weeraratne, n.d. For Avadāna and Jātaka literature in Chinese, see Mukherji 1931:28-30, 313-14.

11. Winternitz 1933(2):279. J. S. Speyer's introduction to the *Avadānaśataka* contains an excellent discussion of various Avadāna books.

12. Winternitz 1933(2):267. The Sanskrit *Sūtrālaṃkāra* is largely lost; the work is preserved in Chinese translation.

13. See the Tibetan text of the *Avadānakalpalatā* (Kṣemendra).

14. T. W. Rhys Davids (1971:182) considers the second century A.D. as the date of the earliest comprehensive Life of the Buddha text. Erich Frauwallner (1956:48-55) and Ria Kloppenborg

(1973:xi-xiii) trace a connected Life of the Buddha story back to about the third century B.C. and to the Pāli Vinaya, placing it in the original Buddhist Canon.

15. See "An Analysis of the Pali Canon" (including the section on "Other Hinayanist Schools") by Arthur C. March in *A Buddhist Students' Manual* (1956:193-248). The same volume includes "An Analysis of the Mahayana Scriptures," also by March (pp. 249-60).

16. Nariman 1919:12. It is interesting that only the last of the *Nidānakathā*'s three sections is in the present Pāli *Mahāvagga* and that only the second section appears in the *Lalitavistara*. The first section appears in various parts of the *Mahāvastu* and was a popular theme in the art of Gandhāra in northern India during the second century A.D. All of this would seem to support Frauwallner's thesis (1956:48-52) that a comprehensive Life of the Buddha account existed as part of the original Vinaya.

PART ONE

THE JĀTAKAS

ANIMAL FABLE JĀTAKAS

The Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla (Cock and Cat), Kacchapa (Talkative Tortoise), and Sīhacamma (Ass in a Lion's Skin) Jātakas are representative of fables, pre-Buddhist or non-Buddhist in origin, which were adopted by Buddhism. With distinctive, sharp-edged humor, they demonstrate that animals who deviate from the natural order of things will swiftly meet their end. Simple familiar tales with direct and obvious meaning, they were very useful for spreading popular acceptance and understanding of Buddhism. Such tales were commonly depicted on the early Buddhist monuments, particularly at Bhārhut in central India. Their appealing demonstrations for common sense and behavior served as parables on human foibles; the Buddha and his followers utilized these fables in sermons to demonstrate doctrinal morals.

For example, in the Pāli *Saṃyuttanikāya*, one of the important canonical books, we find an exhortation to maintain a constant presence of mind. Should one do otherwise--should one allow worldly things to agitate the mind--it will be regretted, as in the story of a field quail who, when leaving his customary and ancestral haunts, fell into the power of a hawk (Rhys Davids, T. W. 1971:194). This fable, and others like it, was the oldest form of the Jātaka: an oral form, without the verses or framework which came into being as tales were memorized and written. The quail fable also appears in *The Jātaka*. Once again it is embellished with an introductory situation which prompted the story, plus a concluding identification and verses. There can be no question that the *Saṃyuttanikāya* is the older document, for *The Jātaka* quotes its chapter and passage as its source (Rhys Davids, T. W. 1971:195).

The telling of these fables, along with the situation or problem which prompted its narration, is very ancient and traditional. We meet with it in the Buddhist literature of various periods and hear it even in modern Buddhist assemblies; it is typical of the great non-Buddhist books (which incorporate many Jātakas), such as the *Pañchatantra*, the *Hitopadeśa*, and the *Tūti-Nāma*. Many of these fables use animals as their main actors--probably because of the universal popularity of caricaturizing and anthropomorphizing animals--but some, such as the great assortment of short tales in the Maha Ummagga Jātaka, use humans.[1] Most of the Jātakas depicted at Bhārhut and many at Bodhgayā and Sāñcī in central India are of this sort. Although Jātakas of different kinds, such as those exemplifying the Mahāyānist cult of total compassion and generosity (see the section "Giving of Life, Limb, and Loved Ones" below) eclipsed the popularity of fable Jātakas, the latter do continue to appear on monuments and in later literature.

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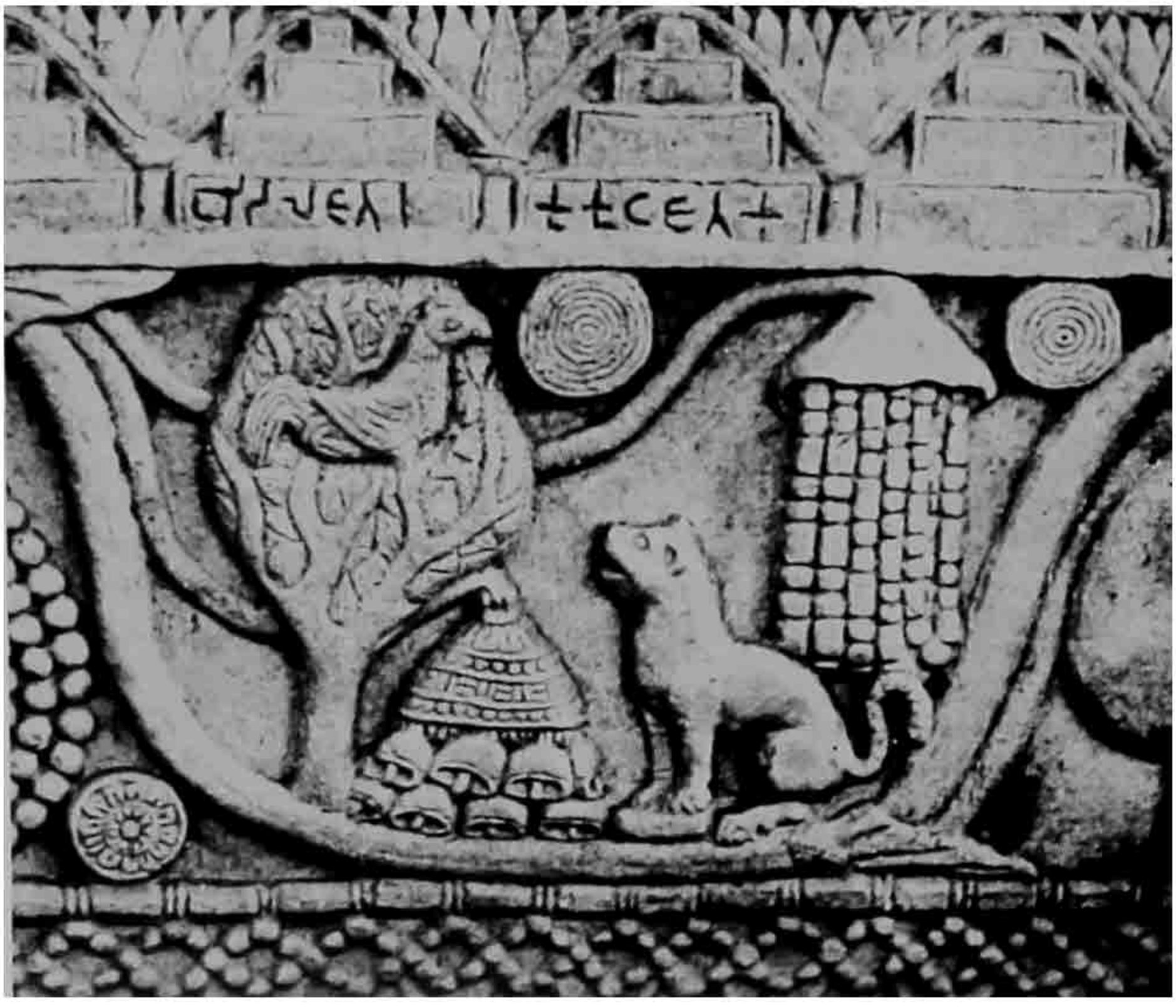
1. I.e., no. 546 from *The Jātaka* (Cowell, vol. 6, pp. 156-246, trans. Cowell and Rouse). Other fables with human characters include Jātaka nos. 43, 44, 80, 97, 150, 151, 234, 376. Other animal fables include nos. 17, 20, 30, 32, 57, 115, 119, 148, 168, 342, 343, 357, 375.



Pl. 1. The cat cajoling with the cock.

The Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla Jātaka, Bhārhut, India, c. 2nd-early 1st cen. B.C. (red sandstone). Indian Museum, Calcutta.

The Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla Jātaka
(The Cock and Cat Fable)

This Jātaka, a traditional fable of craftiness defeated by superior common sense, was, like many tales, taken over from its original non-Buddhist context to serve a dogmatic function. The entire Jātaka (complete with verses), the occasion which prompted the Buddha to tell it as a parable, and its moral-conclusion, follow. Note that the Jātaka opens with part of a verse, the whole of which appears later in the story.[1] It is as if the narrator used "Bird with wings," as a cue to an audience which would have known what was to follow.

> "Bird with wings," etc.--The Master told this tale in Jetavana, concerning a Brother who longed for the world. The Master asked him, 'Why do you long for the world?" "Lord, through passion, for I saw a woman adorned." "Brother, women are like cats, deceiving and cajoling to bring to ruin one who has come into their power," so he told an old tale.
>
> Once upon a time when Brahmadatta was king in Benares, the Bodhisattva was born as a cock and lived in the forest with a retinue of many hundred cocks. Not far away lived a she-cat; and she deceived by devices the other cocks except the Bodhisattva and ate them: but the Bodhisattva did not fall into her power. She thought, 'This cock is very crafty, but he knows not that I am crafty and skillful in device: it is good that I cajole him, saying, 'I will be your wife', and so eat him when he comes into my power." She went to the root of the tree where he perched, and praying him in a speech preceded by praise of his beauty, she spoke the first stanza:
>
> Bird with wings that flash so gaily,
> crest that droops so gracefully,
> I will be your wife for nothing,
> leave the bough and come to me.
>
> The Bodhisattva hearing her thought, "She has eaten all my relatives; now she wishes to cajole me and eat me: I will get rid of her." So he spoke the second stanza:
>
> Lady fair and winning, you have four feet,
> I have only two:
> Beasts and birds should never marry:
> for some other husband sue.

Then she thought, "He is exceedingly crafty; by some device or other I will deceive him and eat him"; so she spoke the third stanza:

I will bring thee youth and beauty,
pleasant speech and courtesy:
Honored wife or simple slave girl,
at thy pleasure deal with me.

Then the Bodhisattva thought, "It is best to revile her and drive her away," so he spoke the fourth stanza:

Thou hast drunk my kindred's blood,
and robbed and slain them cruelly:
"Honored wife!" there is no honor
in your heart when wooing me.

She was driven away and did not endure to look at him again.

So when they see a hero, women sly,
(Compare the cat and cock,) and tempt
him try.

He that to great occasion fails to rise
'Neath foeman's feet in sorrow prostrate
lies.

One prompts a crisis in his fate to see,
As cock from cat, escapes his enemy.

These are stanzas inspired by Perfect Wisdom.

His lesson ended, the Master declared the Truths and identified the Birth:--after the Truths, the backsliding Brother was established in the fruition of the First Path [the Path of Buddhism]:--"At that time the cock was myself" [said the Master].[2]

Note that the above account from *The Jātaka* concludes with the Master identifying himself as having once been the cock. All the Jātakas in *The Jātaka* collection conclude with a linking of the Buddha to the hero. However, there is considerable evidence that most Jātakas at the time of Bhārhut were simply used as parables in illustration of the Doctrine, and did not yet carry any specific significance as stories of the Buddha's previous incarnations.[3]

The Cock and Cat Jātaka falls under the category in folklore of "the trickster found out": there are a great many Jātakas of this type.[4] Great, also, is the number of stories in Indian

literature dealing with women's ways and wickedness. A whole cycle of such stories is found in *The Jātaka* (nos. 61 to 66), while the Kuṇāla Jātaka (no. 536) combines in one frame a whole collection of stories and sayings on the same subject (Winternitz 1933[2]:140-41).

Very likeable tales of females with gleeful sexual appetites, and the trouble they get themselves and their mates into, attain a new dimension under Buddhism. Though frequently used for Buddhist instruction, the Cock and Cat and other fables clearly retain their original flavor. The pious message overlays the fable with the tenuousness of oil on water. The cat in the Bhārhut relief (pl. 1), with opened, panting mouth, staring up at the smug cock, conveys a humor beyond the slightly pompous preaching to a tempted monk which appears in the later Pāli account from *The Jātaka*, quoted above. In the depiction we sense the folly of both characters, though by the time of *The Jātaka*, the cock is the hero and is associated with the Bodhisattva.[5] The sexual connotations and the associations of a conniving cat's nature with that of woman's nature and her voracious appetites are delightfully captured by the Bhārhut sculptor. Between the cat and the cock the sculptor placed an ornamental bunch of small bells. Such bells are worn by dancing girls and probably indicate watchfulness.[6] They jingle softly as the seductive dancer begins her movements, and steadily mount in intensity as she leaps and springs. It is an appropriate and humorous metaphor.

The type of humor in the Cock and Cat fable is not uniquely Indian, but is found in many literatures. Aesop's fable of the Dog, the Cock, and the Fox is similar, ending again with "the trickster found out."[7] The Cock and Cat Jātaka also spread to East Asia as part of a large collection of tales and Buddhist literature, the *Tsa Pao Tsang King*, but how major a role it actually played is unclear because of the absence of any extant visual depictions (Chavannes 1910-1934, vol. 3, no. 403). Probably such fables were not of great importance in East Asian Buddhism, because, by the time of Buddhism's spread into China, the very different emphasis and interests of Buddhism would most likely have excluded them.

NOTES

1. All Jātakas in the Pāli collection (i.e., *The Jātaka*) begin with the opening words from the first verse which appears in the body of the Jātaka. This strongly indicates that these words were once used as a cue for an oral rendering of the whole tale in verse. They would have been an aid to memorization and recall. Originally, the fable was probably in a very free form, well known to all from storytelling sessions of various kinds. Eventually, verses were added, making the tale a ballad or poem, and aiding the Buddhist monk in memorizing. The verses as they appear in *The Jātaka* are older, generally, than the prose commentary, and often somewhat at odds in description and spirit from the prose, but were retained by the compilers of *The Jātaka*.

2. *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 3, pp. 168-69, trans. Francis and Neil. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press.

3. De 1951:1, 18. Though De would perhaps not agree, I suspect that certain Jātakas depicted at Bhārhut, particularly the Viśvāntara, and possibly also the Vidhurapaṇḍita, Makhādeva, and Mahājanaka, could have been considered more holy than others and thus linked with the similarly virtuous deeds of the Bodhisattva. But whether the Jātakas as a whole were taken at this time to be the previous-life stories is doubtful. T. W. Rhys Davids holds the same opinion and also emphatically denies a link between the holy Bodhisattva and a mere animal (Rhys Davids, T. W. 1971:196).

4. Bødker 1957. Other Jātakas of this type include *The Jātaka* nos. 21, 129, 138, 173, 187, 209, 236, and 448. A similar type of Jātaka, in which the trickster is beaten or killed, includes nos. 28, 42, 58, 128, 175, 189 (see "Sīhacamma Jātaka" below), 274, 275, 278, 361, 375, 384, and 395, also from *The Jātaka*.

5. See the closing sentence in the Pāli Jātaka account (*The Jātaka*), quoted above. It is significant that the Bhārhut inscription includes both characters (in fact, the cat is named first), while the Pāli account is actually named only for the cock (*kukkuṭa*). *The Jātaka* almost always contains only the hero's (Bodhisattva's) name, or at least it is his name which appears first. I have entitled this section after the manner of the Bhārhut inscription.

6. Cunningham 1879:77-78. See also Cunningham, pl. XLVII(5) of the Bhārhut coping, for depiction of the Cat and Cock Jātaka.

7. Cunningham 1879:78. Cunningham quotes the account from James' version of the Aesop fable (fable 32, p. 22).

Pl. 2. The tortoise held by his friends, the cranes, and shot and dismembered by the villagers.

The Kacchapa Jātaka, Candi Mendut, Java, c. 800 A.D. (stone, det.).

The Kacchapa Jātaka
(The Talkative Tortoise)

Once upon a time Brahmadatta was king of Benares, and the Bodhisattva, being born to one of the king's court, grew up, and became the king's adviser in all things human and divine. But this king was very talkative; and when he talked there was no chance for any other to get in a word. And the Bodhisattva, wishing to put a stop to his excessive talking, kept watching for an opportunity.[1]

Now there dwelt a Tortoise in a certain pond in the region of Himalaya. Two young wild Geese, searching for food, struck up an acquaintance with him; and bye and bye they grew close friends together. One day these two said to him: "Friend Tortoise, we have a lovely home in Himalaya, on a plateau of Mount Cittakuta, in a cave of gold! Will you come with us?"

"Why," said he, "how can I get there?"

"Oh, we will take you, if only you can keep your mouth shut, and say not a word to anybody."

"Yes, I can do that," says he; "take me along!"

So they made the Tortoise hold a stick between his teeth; and they themselves taking hold of the two ends, sprang up into the air.

The village children saw this, and exclaimed--"There are two geese carrying a tortoise by a stick!"

(By this time the geese flying swiftly had arrived at the space above the palace of the king, at Benares.) The Tortoise wanted to cry out--"Well, and if my friends do carry me, what is that to you, you caitiffs?"--and he let go the stick from between his teeth, and falling into the open courtyard he split in two. . . . The king, with the Bodhisattva, and all his court, came up to the place, and seeing the tortoise asked the Bodhisattva a question. 'Wise Sir, what made this creature fall?" . . . [In answer the Bodhisattva] uttered the following verses:--

The Tortoise needs must speak aloud,
  Although between his teeth
A stick he bit: yet spite of it,
  He spoke--and fell beneath.

Pl. 3. Children pointing to falling tortoise.

The Kacchapa Jātaka, illustration by W. Robinson, from *The Giant Crab and Other Tales from Old India*, late 19th cen.

And now, O mighty master, mark it well.
See thou speak wisely, see thou
speak in season.
To death the Tortoise fell:
He talked too much: that was the
reason.

"He is speaking of me!" the king thought to himself; and asked the Bodhisattva if it was so.

"Be it you, O great king, or be it another," replied he, "whosoever talks beyond measure comes by some misery of this kind;" and so he made the thing manifest. And thenceforward the king abstained from talking, and became a man of few words.[2]

The synthesis between ancient fable and Buddhist adaption seems somewhat firmer here than in the Cat and Cock Jātaka. It is interesting that the narration unfolds not as an old tale told for a current situation, but as an actual event. The same tale appears in the Pāli *Dhammapada Commentary*, but the main body includes only the fable and makes no reference to the Bodhisattva as an advisor (*Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, vol. 3, pp. 248-49). A talkative monk prompted the telling of the tale by the Buddha in both the *Dhammapada Commentary* and *The Jātaka* (the Jātaka's outer framework is excluded from our selection above).

The fable of the Talkative Tortoise appears in a great many texts, most of them non-Buddhist and some non-Asian. The monumental Indian books of tales, the *Pañchatantra* (Edgerton 1924, vol. 2, p. 313), the *Hitopadeśa* (pp. 163-64), and the *Jātakaṭṭhavaṇṇanā* (p. xi, n. 1), all include it. By about the sixth century A.D., it had spread to the Near East and appeared in the Arabic and Persian accounts of the *Anwár-I-Suhailí* (pp. 121-23) and in other animal fable books. From the Near East, this and various other fables spread to the West, being translated into Greek, Latin, and many Romance languages (*Jātakaṭṭhavaṇṇanā*, p. xi, n. 1). A similar tale appears in the Aesopic fables of a tortoise who asked an eagle to teach him to fly, and being dropped by the eagle for his folly, split in two (*Jātakaṭṭhavaṇṇanā*, p. xi). It was also transported to China as part of the *Kieou Tsa p'i yu king* (Chavannes 1910-1934[4]:146).

In most of these texts the turtle meets his death by dropping to the ground and splitting in two. Of the Indian texts, only the *Pañchatantra* account concludes with the tortoise being cut to pieces by people eager for his meat. This seems to emphasize the folly of the turtle and swift action which predators take when one deviates from the natural order of things. It is also the version

chosen for visual depiction at Mathurā in India and at Candi Mendut in Java (pl. 2) (Vogel 1909:157). At Bodhgayā, the tortoise is shown suspended between the two geese; below, villagers point to the foolish-looking creature, just before he retorts and drops to his death (Foucher 1919, pl. I[7]). The Mathurā relief, executed slightly later than the Bodhgayā medallion, includes simply two men clubbing the tortoise. At Candi Mendut, villagers shoot the tortoise, who has so unwisely exposed himself (pl. 2). The Talkative Tortoise tale seems also to be referred to in Japanese art, such as the Muromachi period bronze mirrors showing two geese in their pond, with the tortoise suspended in the center of the relief (Shoten 1969*a*, vol. 2, pl. 147; vol. 3, pl. 50).

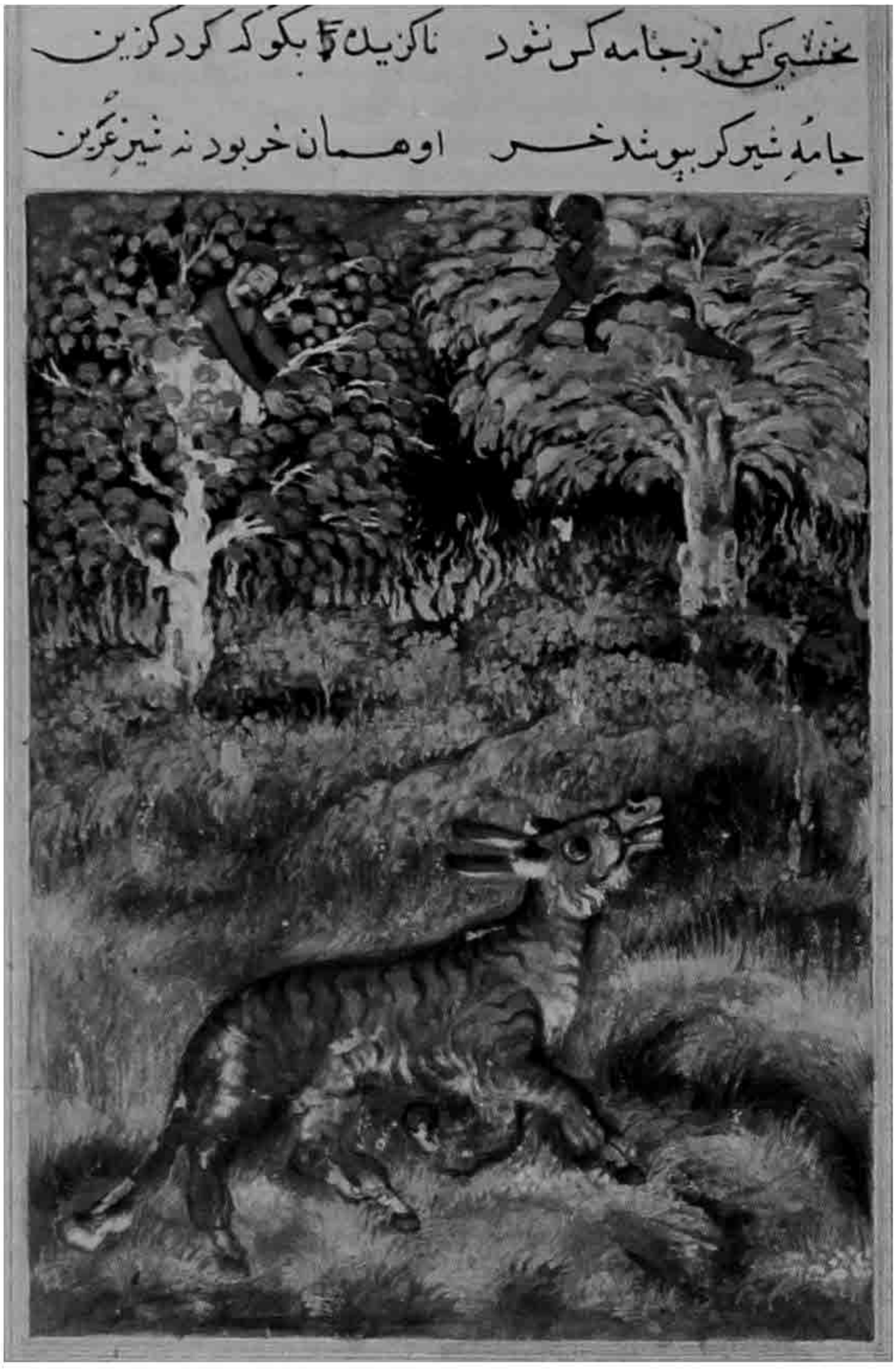
But accounts and visual depictions of this tale did not cease with these monuments of the past. The Talkative Tortoise became a favorite in European and American children's books of our century. One of the most charming of these is a book of tales translated and retold by W. H. D. Rouse (1900:38-40), also the translator of the Talkative Tortoise version given above. An illustration from it, by W. Robinson, of children looking up in surprise and delight at the Tortoise's fall, is reproduced here (pl. 3).

NOTES

1. In the Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla Jātaka the entire account from *The Jātaka* was quoted, together with the occasion which prompted the Buddha to tell the story. But the main body of the Kacchapa Jātaka includes the situation for telling the story as a fable. This is an unusual construction. There is yet another overlying framework preceding this--excluded from our excerpt--in which the Buddha finds cause to tell the tale.

   Note that Brahmadatta was king of Benares in this account and also in the Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla Jātaka, though the Bodhisattva is a cock in the one and a revered advisor in the other. *The Jātaka* is very vague on any sequence of the births, and Brahmadatta is often named as the reigning king, even though this would seem contradictory.

2. *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 2, pp. 123-24, trans. Rouse. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press.



Pl. 4. The ass frightening a villager.

The Sīhacamma Jātaka, from the *Tūti-Nāma* manuscript, India, c. 1560 (color and gold on paper). Cleveland Museum of Art.

The Sīhacamma Jātaka
(The Ass in the Lion's Skin)

Once upon a time, ... the Bodhisattva was born in a farmer's family, and when he grew up, he got a livelihood by tillage.

At the same time there was a Merchant who used to go about hawking goods, which a donkey carried for him. Wherever he went, he used to take his bundle off the ass, and throw a lionskin over him, and then turn him loose in the rice and barley fields. . . .

One day this hawker stopped at a certain village, and while he was getting his own breakfast cooked, he turned the ass loose in a barley field with the lionskin on. The watchmen thought it was a lion, and durst not come near, but fled home and gave the alarm. All the villagers armed themselves, and hurried to the field, shouting and blowing on conchs and beating drums. The ass was frightened out of his wits, and gave a hee-haw! Then the Bodhisattva, seeing that it was a donkey, repeated the first stanza:--

> Nor lion nor tiger I see,
> Not even a leopard is he:
> But a donkey--the wretched old hack!
> With a lionskin over his back!

As soon as the villagers learnt that it was only an ass, they cudgelled him till they broke his bones, and then went off with the lionskin. When the Merchant appeared, and found that his ass had come to grief, he repeated the second stanza:--

> The donkey, if he had been wise,
> Might long the green barley have eaten;
> A lionskin was his disguise:--
> But he gave a hee-haw, and got beaten!

As he was in the act of uttering these words, the ass expired. The Merchant left him, and went his way.[1]

Notice that, just as in the Kacchapa (Talkative Tortoise) Jātaka, *The Jātaka* tells the Sīhacamma story as an actual event in one of the former lives of the Buddha. But, in the introduction to the Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla (Cock and Cat) Jātaka, it is made clear that

that story is an "old tale." The Bodhisattva is human in both the Kacchapa and Sīhacamma Jātakas, but animal in the Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla Jātaka. This may be a significant fact. If it is true that in the early centuries of Buddhism the Bodhisattva's former lives did not include animal births and that animal tales were used only as anecdotes, the reference in the Kukkuṭa-Biḍāla to its being simply an "old tale" certainly predates *The Jātaka* prose which links the cock with the Bodhisattva.

Like the other two animal tales in our selection, the Sīhacamma Jātaka exists also as a secular fable. Some interesting alterations occur in their Buddhist versions: most notably a moralistic use of the sexual connotations in the Cat and Cock Jātaka; the intrusion of human characters in the Tortoise Jātaka as a device to include a human Bodhisattva; and a total absence of the lecherous qualities in the Ass in the Lion's Skin Jātaka which so mark the fable as it appears in non-Buddhist books. One such account appears in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, or the *Ocean of Story*:

> A certain washerman had a thin donkey; so, in order to make it fat, he used to cover it with the skin of a panther and let it loose to feed in his neighbor's corn. While it was eating the corn, people were afraid to drive it away, thinking that it was a panther. One day a cultivator, who had a bow in his hand, saw it. He thought it was a panther, and through fear bending down, and making himself humpbacked, he proceeded to creep away, with his body covered with a rug. When the donkey saw him going away in this style, he thought he was another donkey, and being primed with corn, he uttered aloud his own asinine bray. Then the cultivator came to the conclusion that it was a donkey, and returning, killed with an arrow the foolish animal, which had made an enemy with its own voice.[2]

In Indian stories, the ass is usually regarded as a lecherous figure. The dark cloak makes the ass take the man, cautiously slinking away, for a coy female of his own kind. The fat and lusty ass starts in pursuit, seeking to attract his lady fair by braying, which only leads to his death (*Pañchatantra*, Edgerton 1965, p. 111). None of this appears in *The Jātaka* where the ass brays in fright because he is attacked by men who take him for a lion.

Like the Kacchapa (Talkative Tortoise) Jātaka, this story spread to the West. It is unclear by what routes and whether by oral or wholly literary tradition the story was carried, but the Sīhacamma does seem to be one of the few Jātakas which spread into Greece and Roman Italy.[3] There are fully half a dozen occurences

of the "Ass in the Lion's Skin" story, the oldest one apparently being that in Lucian (second century A.D.) and the late Latin fables of Avian. In the Greek and Latin Aesopic fables, the skin is always a lion's, as in the *The Jātaka*. No Greek version has the lechery motif, and only in one very late version of the Aesopic fables is the ass recognized by his bray, a feature on which all Indic versions agree. Possibly the Greeks borrowed from *The Jātaka*, or one related to the Pāli form. Or, they may have substituted the more familiar lion for the panther of the *Kathāsarit-sāgara* and the *Pañchatantra*.[4]

Another fable book which includes the Sīhacamma story is the Persian *Tūti-Nāma*. The framestory is of a parrot assigned to watch over a licentious lady. The parrot begins telling a tale each evening as she prepares to go out for a night with her lover. She becomes so engrossed in the narrative that she cannot leave; dawn arises by the time the parrot finishes and it is too late for her to escape into the night. Again we see the delight in stories of woman's fickle and lusty nature, and the lengths that must be gone to in bridling her. There is a considerable literature of parrots being assigned to watch over licentious women who would wish to wander. The foolish parrot may reproach such a woman on her misconduct and end up having his neck wrung by her; the wise parrot will not attempt to assay the impossible but will hold his tongue when the master returns; and the clever and wise parrot will delight the lady with stories and thus keep her from her lover while saving his own neck.[5]

In plate 4 we see the frightened peasants in the trees and the foolish donkey dressed in a tiger's skin, as he brays and betrays himself.

Like the Kacchapa Jātaka, the Sīhacamma became a favorite in children's literature. One book, published in London in 1910, includes an account and an illustration of the merchant neatly tying a huge mane and ferocious mask around the fatuous beast (Jacobs 1910:150-51).

NOTES

1. *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 2, pp. 76-77, trans. Rouse. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press.

2. *Kathāsaritsāgara*, Somadeva, vol. 5, pp. 99-100. Reprinted by permission of Motilal Banarsidass.

3. *The Pañchatantra*, Edgerton 1965, p. 13, n. 1. Edgerton notes that in the nineteenth century there were various theories on historical relationships between the Greek Aesopian fables and Indian tales but that most reveal no actual genetic relationship. The "Ass in the Lion's Skin" is one of the few exceptions; also, some tales reveal influence from Greece into India.

4. *The Pañchatantra*, Edgerton 1965, pp. 14-15. The *Hitopadeśa* (p. 120) also includes the tale, but the skin is a tiger's skin (see pl. 4).

5. Bødker, 1957. Generally it is a lusty woman who is watched over by a parrot, but one book is of a parrot who prevents a watchman from visiting a lonely queen's bed by telling him stories of dereliction of duty (Bødker 1957:36).

   Jātaka 198 (from *The Jātaka*) and the *Tūti-Nāma*, tale 10, tell of a man leaving home and asking two parrots to keep a watch on his wife. One reproaches her on her misconduct, and has his neck wrung. The other holds his tongue, even when the husband returns (Bødker 1957:36).

   Another Jataka (no. 145 of *The Jātaka*) tells of the same situation, except that the first parrot is persuaded by the second not to try to stop the woman's inevitable philanderings (Bødker 1957:36).

HEROIC ADVENTURE TALES

JĀTAKAS STRESSING MAGICAL, FANCIFUL, "FAIRY TALE" ELEMENTS

We have seen in the previous section three examples from the large body of animal fable Jātakas. With their pithy directness and sharp humor, these brief tales were immensely popular. Another type of Jātaka, also very popular, is of an adventure-"fairy tale" genre. This type generally lacks the brevity and directness of meaning which characterizes the animal fable Jātakas but owes its appeal to colorful descriptions of mythical beings and places, exploits of plucky heroes, and the enchantments of beautiful ladies. These tales are generally conglomerates and elaborations of multiple short legends. Structure tends to be loose and plot rambling, as hero and listener are transported to strange lands and meet mythical beings. For all these reasons, the heroic adventure Jātakas are actually closer to romances than to anecdotal tales.

Many of these stories concern the interaction of the Bodhisattva as a prince or sage with ogres, *nāgas*, and *yakṣas*.[1] In these encounters, the Bodhisattva sometimes becomes the husband or son of an impassioned ogress or *nāga* queen, or sometimes tricks the ogre by magical and clever devices into ceasing its practice of devouring men. By such means the Bodhisattva shows them the way to a virtuous life.

In the Jātaka chosen to exemplify this genre, the Vidhura-paṇḍita Jātaka, there are two main characters: a wise and eloquent minister (the Bodhisattva) and a vigorous *yakṣa* general. It was, and in Theravāda Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia still is, a great favorite.

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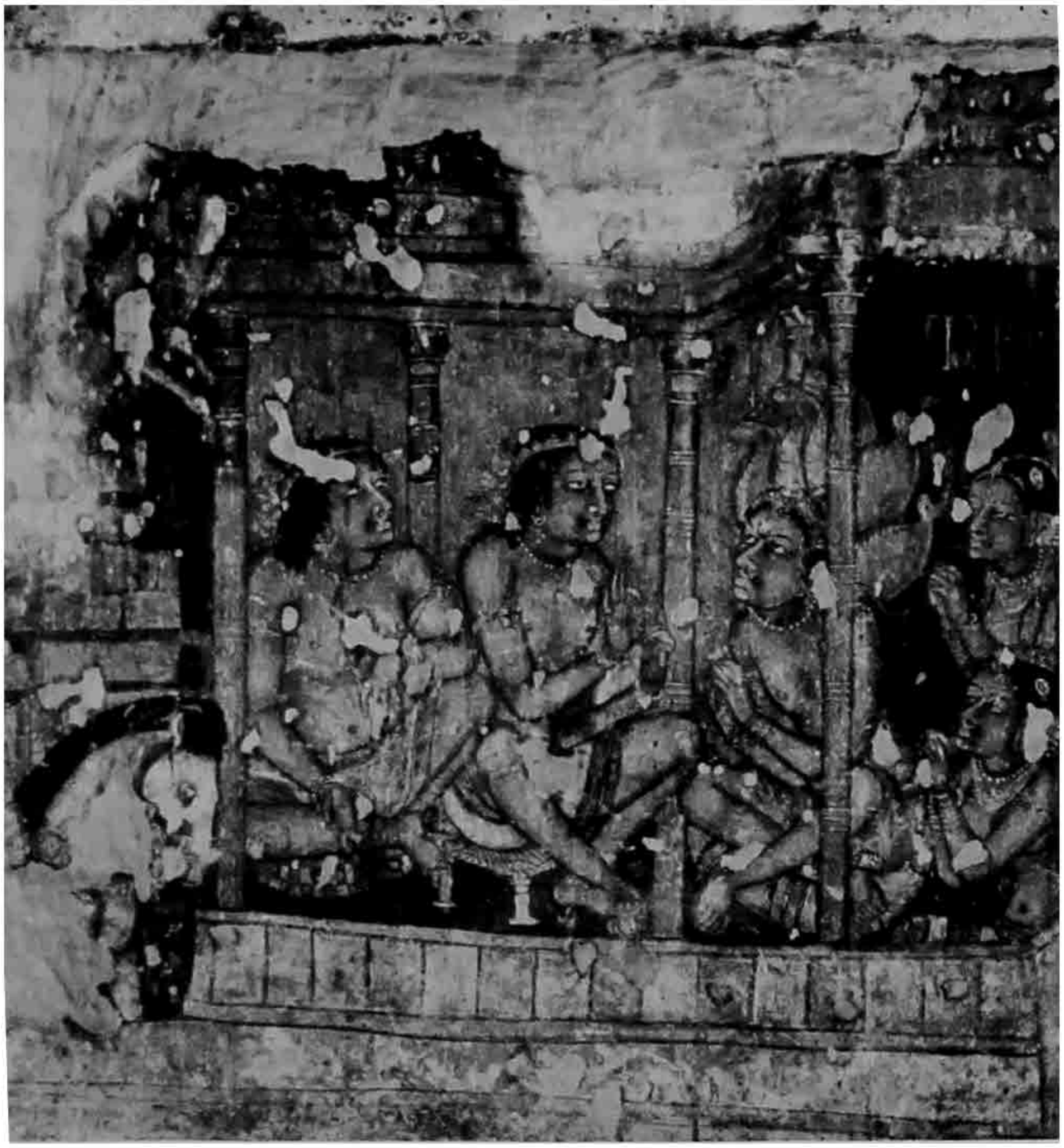
1. Both *nāgas* and *yakṣas* are pre-Buddhist nature spirits; *nāgas* are cobras who have the ability to assume human or half-human form. *Yakṣas* are spirits generally associated with the fecundity of the earth but also have more specific attributes. Both are powerful, potent forces, sometimes benign, and sometimes malevolent. They dwell in their own realms but also interact with the world of men. Ogres are always man-eating but can be converted by a wise and clever man; ogresses often fall desperately in love with men. See, for examples, *The Jātaka*, nos. 6, 55, 61, 432, 513, and 543.



Pl. 5. Purṇaka, Vidhura, and the Nāga King.
Note the magical horse at left.

The Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka, Ajantā Cave 2, India, late 5th cen. (wall painting, det.).

The Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka
(The Story of Vidhura the Wise)

Once upon a time in the Kuru kingdom in the city of Indapatta a king ruled named Dhanañjaya-koravya. He had a minister named Vidhurapaṇḍita who gave him instructions concerning temporal and spiritual matters; and having a sweet tongue and great eloquence in discoursing of the law . . . [he was admired and sought after. When (Vimalā) the queen of the Nāgas] heard an account of his preeminence she longed to hear him discourse on the law [of religion] and she thought to herself, "If I tell the king that I long to hear him discourse on the law, and ask him to bring him here, he will not bring him to me; what if I were to pretend to be ill and complained of a sick woman's longing?" . . . She told him in the following:

> There is an affection in women,--it
> is called a longing, O king; O monarch
> of the Nāgas, I desire Vidhura's heart
> brought here without guile.

. . . The Nāga king went to his own chamber and sat on his bed and pondered how bent Vimalā was on obtaining Vidhura's heart. . . . [He said to his beautiful daughter, Irandatī:] "Daughter, there is no one in my court who can bring Vidhura here; do thou seek out some husband who can bring Vidhura." . . . [and Irandatī then] gathered all the flowers in the Himalaya which had color, scent, or taste, and having adorned the entire mountain like a precious jewel, she spread a couch of flowers upon it, and, having executed a pleasant dance, she sang a sweet song:

> What gandharva or demon, what Nāga,
> kinnara or man, or what sage, able to
> grant all desires, will be my husband
> the livelong night?[1]

Now at that time . . . Puṛnaka, the Yakṣa general, as he was riding on a magic [flying] horse . . . heard that song of hers, and the voice of the woman . . . pierced his skin and nerves and penetrated to his very bones . . . [and he said to her] . . . "O lady [to have you as my bride] I can bring you Vidhura's heart. . . ."

> Purṇaka, having mounted his [magic] horse, a charger fit for bearing the gods, himself richly adorned and with his beard and hair trimmed, went through the sky.

. . .

As he went through the air he pondered, "Vidhurapaṇḍita has a great retinue and he cannot be taken by force, but Dhananjaya-koravya is renowned for his skill in gambling. I will conquer him in play and so seize Vidhurapaṇḍita. . . .

[Purṇaka, having reached his destination, said to the King:] "O great king, if I am overcome by thee in play I will give thee this precious jewel, but what wilt thou give me?" "Except my body and white umbrella [my kingdom] let all that I have be the prize." "Then my lord, do not delay--I have come from a far distance--let the gaming room be ready. . . ."

By Purṇaka's power the dice fell so as to conquer the king . . . [and Purṇaka said:]

> Elephants, oxen, horses, jewels and earrings, whatever gems thou hast in the earth, Vidhura the minister is the best of them all,-- he has been won by me, pay him down to me.

. . . [Vidhura, who was the Bodhisattva, made no protest, but seized] the horse's tail [and he said to Purṇaka] "I have seized the tail, proceed, O youth, as thou wilt." At that moment Purṇaka gave a signal to the horse who was endowed with reason, and he forthwith bounded into the sky, carrying the seer. . . . While Purṇaka thus went off carrying the Great Being with him, the seer's sons and other spectators went to Purṇaka's dwelling; but when they found not the Great Being, they lamented with loud and repeated cries. . . . Meantime Purṇaka, after he had set the Great Being on the top of the Black Mountain thought to himself, "As long as this man lives there is no chance of prosperity for me; I will kill him and take his heart's flesh and I will then go to the Nāga world and give it to Vimalā, and having thus obtained her daughter Irandatī I shall rise to the world of the gods. . . ."

[Upon telling this to the Bodhisattva, the Great Being reflected] "Vimalā has no need of my

heart. She must have heard of my power in discoursing the law and must have felt a great longing to hear my words. Purṇaka must have been ordered to do this through a misconception, and he, influenced by this, his own misconception, has brought about all this calamity. Now, my value as a sage consists in my power to bring to light and to discover absolute truths. If Purṇaka kills me, what good will it do?" . . . [The Great Being then persuaded Purṇaka to bring him first to the Nāga palace where he preached to the Nāga king and explained the Queen's true longing]. . . .

The Nāga king, having heard the religious discourse of the Great Being, thought to himself, "The sage cannot stay long away from his home; I will show him to Vimalā and let her hear his good words, and so calm her longing desire, and I will gratify King Dhanañjaya and then it will be right to send the sage home." . . .

> Purṇaka, delighted and overjoyed,
> having won the Nāga maiden Irandatī,
> with his whole soul full of joy, thus
> addressed him who was the best of the
> Kurus in action: "Thou hast made me
> possessed of a wife, I will do what is
> due to thee, O Vidhura; [I will today
> return you to your home]."[2]

Our excerpt is, of necessity, greatly abbreviated. The whole of the Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka in *The Jātaka* is actually a romance in six sections (*khaṇḍa*s) (Winternitz 1933[2]:133). Originally, the Jātaka probably included even more material. It originated from and split into varied segments (De 1951:67).

The wise Vidhura appears again in the Dhūmakāri Jātaka (no. 413) as the priest and counsellor to King Dhanañjaya (*The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 3, pp. 241-43, trans. Francis). In this Jātaka, as a lesson to the king against favoring new troops over old, Vidhurapaṇḍita preaches a fable about the fate of a goatherd who abandoned his goats to follow a golden deer, only to be deserted in turn by the deer, and return to his dead goats.

The wise minister Vidhura also appears many times in the Hindu epic, the *Mahābhārata*, as a knower of fables, parables, and wise sayings (Winternitz 1933[1]:472).

The Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka, like most of *The Jātaka*'s contents, spread to East Asia (Chavannes 1910-1934[3]:100). It is referred to in an abbreviated form in the *Jātakastava* (discovered at

Pl. 6. The journey from the Kuru kingdom.

The Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka, Bhārhut, India, c. 2nd-early 1st cen. B.C. (red sandstone). Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Tun-Huang, China); this text primarily describes Vidhurapaṇḍita's lack of fear before the *nāga*s and stresses the menace of their firebreathing mouths (*Jātakastava*, Khotanese, pp. 431-32). In the Pāli account, the *nāga*s are far more benign: in fact, their princely palace was a reward for good deeds in previous lives (*The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 6, p. 151, trans. Cowell).

The Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka has enjoyed great popularity in Buddhist Asia. At Bhārhut the narrative is shown in some detail. In one Bhārhut relief Puṛṇaka and Irandatī stand in the mountain garden. Below, Puṛṇaka asks the Nāga King for Irandatī's hand. Next, Puṛṇaka and his magic horse are seen at the game of dice. Three scenes appear in the concluding panel (pl. 6). In the center, Puṛṇaka and his horse ascend in flight, while Vidhurapaṇḍita grasps the horse's tail. Above this, Puṛṇaka dashes the head of Vidhurapaṇḍita against the rocks but is persuaded not to kill him. At left, the Minister preaches to Puṛṇaka. The descent to the *nāga* world, preaching to the Nāga King and Queen and return of Vidhurapaṇḍita are perhaps implied as the natural outcome of what has been presented, but are not actually shown (the reliefs on the adjacent face of the pillar refer to some other narrative) (Cunningham 1879:79-82, pl. 18). It is interesting that visual and literary accounts can differ so greatly in emphasis: the *Jātakastava*, as mentioned above, primarily consists of praises to Vidhurapaṇḍita for his courage in meeting with the *nāga*s and converting them, but it apparently was never included in the Bhārhut version.

The story of Vidhurapaṇḍita is extensively described in the reliefs of Amarāvāti in southern India (Sivaramamurti 1942, pls. 29, 44). Several medallions show key scenes, particularly the game of dice and preaching to the *nāga*s, while minor episodes unfold in bands of reliefs. It was also an important theme at Ajantā, covering most of the right wall in the main hall of Cave 2, a detail of which is shown in plate 5.

Accounts of the Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka spread beyond India and with them arose demand for visual enactments. It seems to be the subject of a wall painting from Piandjikent in Central Asia, which shows two men engaged in a game of chess (Rice 1965:105, fig. 88). And since it offers great opportunity for lavish detail, it is an especially expressive subject in the fanciful, chimerical style of Thai mural painting.[3]

NOTES

1. *Gandharvas* are angelic beings who glorify the gods. *Kinnaras* also surround the celestial entourage; they are half-human, half-bird musicians.

2. *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 6, pp. 126-56, trans. Cowell and Rouse. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press.

3. Wray et al. 1972, pl. 24, Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka from Wat Yai Intharam, Thonburī: The Dice Game; and pl. 25, Vidhurapaṇḍita taking leave of his family, and holding the tail of Puṛṇaka's horse.

JĀTAKAS OF RENUNCIATION

There are a number of Jātakas.more elevated in their moral message than are the animal fable and heroic adventure Jātakas.[1] One of the most distinctive and pervasive themes of such Jātakas is renunciation of the world of royal wealth and desires in exchange for an ascetic life. Such stories belong to a common stock of ancient Indian ascetic poetry from which many of the most beautiful poems of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* come (Winternitz 1933, vol. 1, p. 405; vol. 2, p. 147). It is usually some insignificant event, such as the discovery of some sign of aging, the observing of a mango tree bereft of fruit, or the withering of a leaf, which prompts renunciation. Though their circumstances may seem simplistic, these Jātakas were effective frameworks in which to impress upon listeners the folly of great attachment to worldly things and ways.

Many of these Jātakas are in the form of sacred ballads with refrains at the end of each verse stanza telling of the need to leave.[2] In other cases, such as the Culla Sutasoma Jātaka, the repeat pattern is composed in the great laments and questionings by the king's seven hundred wives, many children, courtiers, merchants, and townspeople.[3] The Kumbhakāra Jātaka combines into a patterned refrain many short stories of the various sights which prompted a group of kings to renounce the world.[4]

One of these renunciation stories, the Makhādeva Jātaka, and related Jātakas of a king discovering a gray hair and thus renouncing the world, will be examined in this section.

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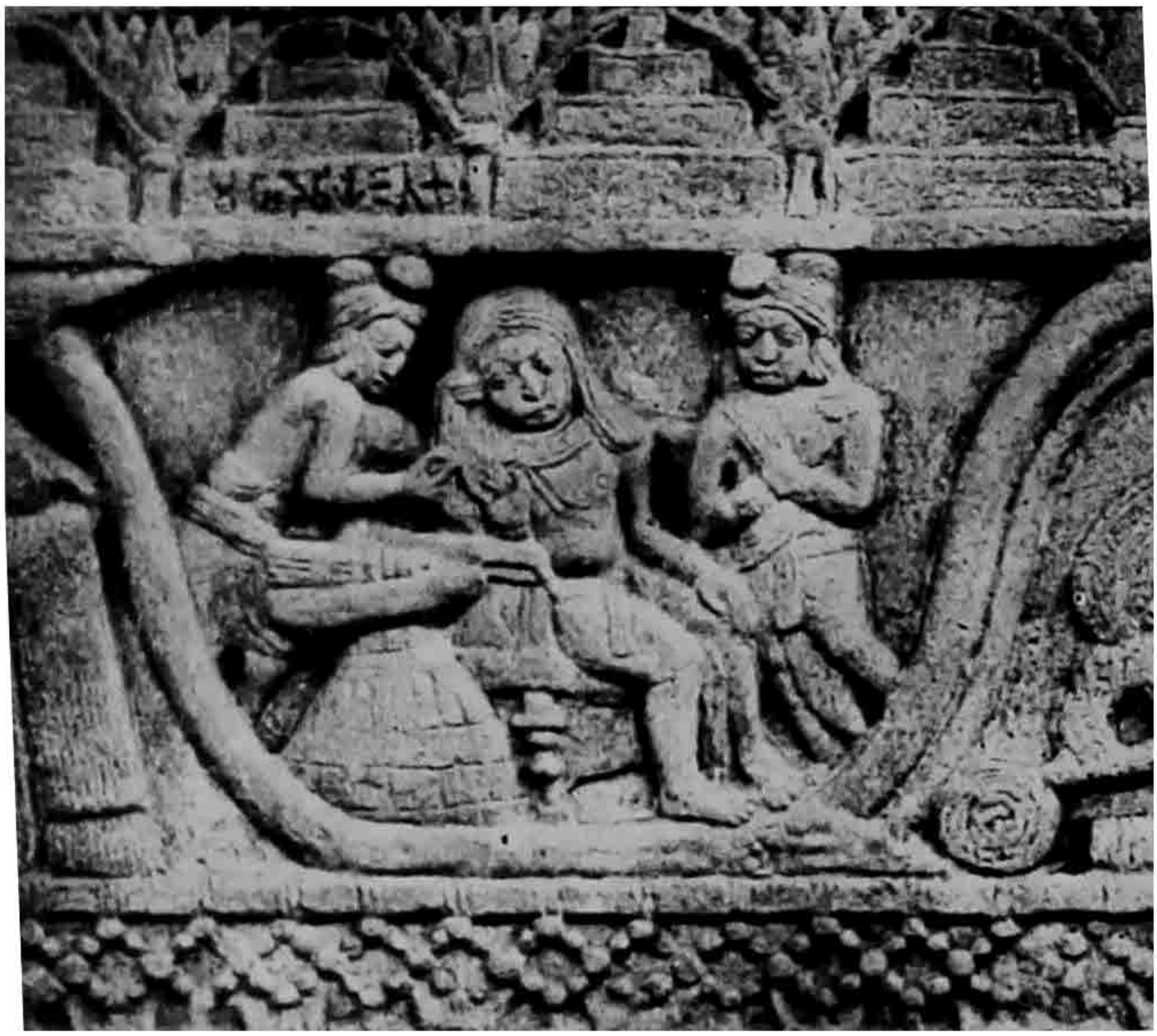
1. For example, anecdotes of thrift (*The Jātaka*, no. 4), justice (nos. 7, 204, 234), loyalty (nos. 27, 121), and wisdom-prudence (nos. 1, 2, 11, 30, 32, 36, 53, 74, 115, 150, 238, 515). There is some overlap, especially in tales of wisdom and prudence, with animal fable Jātakas.

2. See Jātaka no. 529, the Sonaka Jātaka (*The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 5, pp. 127-34, trans. Francis), and Jātaka no. 539, the Mahājanaka Jātaka (*The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 6, pp. 19-37, trans. Cowell and Rouse).

3. See Jātaka no. 525, the Culla Sutasoma Jātaka (*The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 5, pp. 91-99, trans. Francis), and Jātaka no. 539, the Mahājanaka Jātaka (see note 2).

4. See Jātaka no. 408, the Kumbhakāra Jātaka (*The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 3, pp. 228-32, trans. Francis and Neil).



Pl. 7. Makhādeva holds his gray hair.

The Makhādeva Jātaka, Bhārhut, India, c. 2nd-early 1st cen. B.C. (red sandstone). Indian Museum, Calcutta.

The Makhādeva Jātaka
(The Story of Makhādeva and his Gray Hair)

Once upon a time in Miṭhilā in the realm of Videha there was a king named Makhādeva, who was righteous and ruled righteously. For successive periods of eighty-four thousand years he had respectively amused himself as prince, ruled as viceroy, and reigned as king. All these long years had he lived, when one day he said to his barber,--"Tell me, friend barber, when you see any gray hairs in my head." So one day, years and years after, the barber did find among the raven locks of the king a single gray hair, and he told the king so. . . . The king had at that time still eighty-four thousand years more to live; but nevertheless at the sight of that one gray hair he was filled with deep emotion. . . . "Foolish Makhādeva!" he cried; "gray hairs have come upon you before you have been able to rid yourself of depravities." . . . He sent for his eldest son and said to him, "My son, gray hairs are come upon me, and I am become old. I have had my fill of human joys, and fain would taste the joys divine; the time for my renunciation has come. Take the sovereignty upon yourself; as for me, I will take up my abode in the pleasance called Makhādeva's Mango Grove, and there tread the ascetic's path."

As he was thus bent on leading the Brother's life, his ministers drew near and said, "What is the reason, sire, why you adopt the Brother's life?"

Taking the gray hair in his hand, the king repeated this stanza to his ministers:--

> Lo, these gray hairs that on my head appear
> Are Death's own messengers that come to rob
> My life. 'Tis time I turned from worldly things,
> And in the hermit's path sought saving peace.

And after these words, he renounced his sovereignty that self-same day and became a recluse. Dwelling in that very Mango Grove of Makhādeva, he there during eighty-four thousand years fostered the Four Perfect States within himself, and, dying with insight full and unbroken, was reborn in the Realm of Brahmā. . . .[1]

Very little has been omitted in our excerpt from *The Jātaka* text; it is a short and very simple but curiously dignified account of retirement from the pomp of royalty to a life of asceticism ("The First Fifty Jātakas" 1884:106). This dignified plainness of the text also finds expression in the Bhārhut balustrade relief of the Makhādeva Jātaka (pl. 7).[2] In the depiction, Makhādeva solemnly looks at the gray hair offered by the barber, seeing in it a symbol of the transitoriness of all things and the passing of time, even in a golden era when men lived to extreme old age.[3]

The Makhādeva Jātaka is only one of a variety of Jātakas on the theme of renunciation upon the discovery of a single gray hair. The Susīma, Culla Sutasoma, and Nimi Jātakas share the same essential events and message.[4] In all the accounts the king focuses on the gray hair as the symbol of life's brevity and leaves his wealth and position to become an ascetic, eventually being reborn in the Realm of Brahmā.

Several of these accounts are from the last of the twenty-two books in *The Jātaka* collection; because the accounts become longer with each successive book, the simplicity of the Makhādeva Jātaka, which is from the first book, is lost. Structure and continuity are conveyed in another way: in the Culla Sutasoma Jātaka, a repeat pattern of theme and verse is set in motion by the successive laments of the king's wives, children, courtiers, etc. Sutasoma's act inspires all of these people in turn to follow him. They settle together, pursue a holy life, and are all reborn in the Realm of Brahmā. This theme of communalism is evidenced also in the Nimi Jātaka, where the tradition established by Makhādeva is followed by all his descendants through the ages. Makhādeva is reincarnated as Nimi to end the line and complete the tradition.

The entire Makhādeva Jātaka (no. 9) forms the first part of the Nimi Jātaka (no. 541). This is also the content of the Makhādevasūtra in the Pāli sacred text of the *Majjhimanikāya*.[5] The framestory/preface of both the Nimi Jātaka and the Makhādevasūtra opens with the Buddha and monks walking in a mango park. Ānanda, his close disciple and friend, seeing the Buddha smile, asks him why. Whereupon, the Buddha replies that the spot reminds him of his asceticism in his Makhādeva incarnation, and he relates the tradition of renunciation begun by Makhādeva and concluded with Nimi. This framestory of Ānanda noticing a smile on the Buddha's face, thereby prompting him to relate an incident, is a common device in the sacred scriptures but is very rare in *The Jātaka*.[6]

Like all the stories in the concluding books of *The Jātaka*, the Nimi Jātaka has some of the qualities of a romance and a ballad. In it, Nimi has a moment of doubt as to whether it is best to remain a king and give alms, or to renounce the world. Śakra, chief of the gods, sends a celestial carriage to transport Nimi to the heavens and hells to demonstrate that the best of deeds is

renunciation.[7] In the descriptions of the glories of heaven and the horrors of hell which Nimi sees in his travels in the celestial chariot, we recall the fanciful, magical features of the Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka (see "Heroic Adventure Tales" above). The Nimi is very far from the simplicity of the Makhādeva Jātaka, and yet the compilers of *The Jātaka* saw fit to preserve the Makhādeva Jātaka in an independent form and also as part of the lengthy Nimi Jātaka.

NOTES

1. *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 1, pp. 30-32, trans. Chalmers. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press. The Realm of Brahmā, one of the Brahmanic and Buddhist worlds, is the "world of matter": rebirth is not through parents, and men's bodies are luminous, as were those of men in the dawn of creation (see *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* 1928[4]:135).

2. Cunningham 1879, pl. XLVII(2). A similar composition is found at Pagān (see Ko 1909, pl. 42 and p. 129).

3. In the Makhādeva Jātaka and the Makhādevasūtra (see note 5), as in most Renunciation Jātakas in which a gray hair is discovered, there are pre-Buddhist, Brahmanic elements. Makhādeva had been prince for eighty-four thousand years, viceroy for the same, had reigned for a long time when the gray appeared, and he lived eighty-four thousand years afterwards as an ascetic. Here is clearly a reference to the three periods of Brahmin life: student, householder, and ascetic. See "The First Fifty Jātakas" 1884:107.

4. See Susīma Jātaka (*The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 3, pp. 237-39, trans. Francis); Culla-Sutasoma Jātaka (vol. 5, pp. 91-99, trans. Francis); and Nimi Jātaka (vol. 6, pp. 53-68, trans. Cowell and Rouse).

5. *Majjhimanikāya*, Horner, pp. 267-73. Though their content is basically the same, the Nimi Jātaka and the Makhādevasūtra are not identical. Narration is more stereotyped in the Makhādevasūtra, and the descriptions of celestial realms are abbreviated.

6. The framestory/preface for the Nimi Jātaka quite possibly was derived from the *Majjhimanikāya*. They may also have a common source for the body (see *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 6, p. 53, nn. 1-2, trans. Cowell and Rouse).

7. This very ancient Brahmanic and Hīnayāna Buddhist tradition, which values the ascetic life and meditation above giving alms, is reversed under Mahāyāna Buddhism, as we will see in the Jātakas exemplifying Mahāyānist perfection ("Giving of Life, Limb, and Loved Ones" below).

JĀTAKAS OF HEROIC AND HOLY ANIMALS

The animal fable Jātakas, with their characteristic sharp-edged humor, demonstrate that those who deviate from the natural order of things will swiftly meet their end. Their appealing demonstrations for sensible behavior served as parables on human foibles. The heroic and holy animal Jātakas lack the directness and humor of the animal fable Jātakas. Instead of being anecdotes for common sense, their intent is to show the virtues in righteous behavior. Their tone is solemn, somewhat like that of the renunciation Jātakas.

The animal fable hero has as much cleverness as wisdom, perhaps more; in the heroic and holy animal Jātakas, the hero is truly self-sacrificing, with a purity and holiness different from the animal fable characters. Another difference between these two types of animal Jātakas is that the fables use animals as their main actors because of the universal popularity of anthropomorphizing animals as caricatures of man. The heroic and holy animal Jātakas portray a sublimity of character rare in man. In fact, man is often corrupt and ungrateful in these narratives; or, at the very least, he has much to learn from the deeds and preaching of these holy creatures. Of course, there are also Jātakas concerned with great and saintly men, as we shall discover in the Jātakas exemplifying Mahāyānist perfection; but the heroic and holy animal Jātaka is a distinctive and popular type in Buddhist literature.[1] Two representative examples, the Mahākapi (Great Monkey) and Ruru, or Ṃriga (Golden Deer), Jātakas follow.

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1. See, for examples, *The Jātaka* (Cowell): the Nigrodhamiga Jātaka, in which a golden deer saves his herd by the offer of himself (similar to the Mahākapi Jātaka) (vol. 1, pp. 36-42, trans. Chalmers); the Silvavanāga Jātaka, in which a white elephant saves a man's life and the man repays the deed with treachery (similar to Ruru, or Ṃriga, and Ṣaḍdanta Jātakas) (vol. 1, pp. 174-77, trans. Chalmers); the Cattālīsanipāta Jātaka, in which three birds give wise advice and loyalty to a king who has adopted them as his children (vol. 5, pp. 59-64, trans. Francis).

Pl. 8. Flight of the monkey herd, the net spread for Mahākapi, and the two kings in discourse.

The Mahākapi Jātaka, Bhārhut, India. c. 2nd-early 1st cen. B.C. (red sandstone). Indian Museum, Calcutta.

The Mahākapi Jātaka
(The Story of the Great Monkey)

The Mahākapi Jātaka, or Story of the Great Monkey, appears both in the Pāli collection of tales, *The Jātaka* (Cowell, vol. 3, pp. 225-27, trans. Francis and Neil), and in the Sanskrit *Jātakamālā* by Āryaśūra (pp. 244-53). While the Pāli work is written in a relatively plain, straightforward style, the *Jātakamālā* is more ornate and sophisticated. Excerpts from the *Jātakamālā* version follow:

> In the heart of the Himavat there is a blessed region, whose soil is covered with many kinds of herbs of different efficacious properties, and abounds in hundreds of forest trees with their great variety and manifold arrangement of boughs, twigs, flowers and fruits. It is irrigated by mountain currents whose water possesses the limpidity of crystals, and resounds with the music of manifold crowds of birds. In that forest the Bodhisattva lived, it is said, a chief of a troop of monkeys. . . . There he had his residence on a large banyan tree. . . . Those branches were somewhat curved, being loaded with excellent fruits of a size surpassing that of palmyra nuts, and distinguished by an exceedingly sweet flavor and a lovely color and smell. . . . Now one branch of that tree hung over a river which passed by that place . . . [and it happened that one fruit became loose from its stalk and fell into the water]. Being carried down the stream, it stuck at last in the network of a fence . . . of a certain king, who, with his harem, was sporting at that time in the water of that river.
>
> Spreading about its delicious smell of great excellency and delightful to the nose, that fruit made the different other odors disappear, that exhaled there from the garlands, the rum, and the perfumes of the bathing women, however those scents were intensified by the union of the women interlacing each other. . . . [The king] had it brought to him, and after examination by reliable physicians tasted it himself. . . .
>
> Had its extraordinary color and smell stirred his surprise before, now its flavor filled him with the highest admiration, and agitated him with lust. . . . Accordingly, having made up his mind to find out its origin, he . . . set out, accompanied by a great body of armed people. . . . At last

he reached the neighborhood of that tree, a place difficult for men to approach. . . . Coming near, he saw many hundreds of apes filling [the tree's] boughs and branches and occupied in eating its fruits. The king became angry with those monkeys who robbed him of the objects so ardently longed for, and with harsh words as "Hit them! hit them! drive them away, destroy them all, these scoundrels of monkeys!" he ordered his men to assail them. . . .

[The Bodhisattva] beheld his monkeys unable to do anything but utter discordant cries of fear, while they looked up to him with faces pale with dejection. Being himself free from affliction, sadness and anxiety, he comforted his tribe of monkeys, and having resolved upon their rescue, climbed to the top of the tree, desirous to jump over to the mountain peak near it. And although that place could be reached only by many successive leaps, the Great Being, by dint of his surpassing heroism, passed across like a bird and held the spot. . . . Then holding fast that branch [of the tree] . . . he ordered his tribe, making them the signal proper to his race, to come quickly off the tree. And the monkeys, as they were bewildered by fear, having found that way of retreat, hastened to make use of it, wildly rushing over his body without regard to him, and safely escaped. . . .

While being incessantly trodden by the feet of those fear-bewildered monkeys, his body lost the solidity of its flesh, but his mind did not lose its extraordinary firmness. On beholding this, the king and his men were overcome with the utmost astonishment. . . . [The king then lifted the Great Being down.] . . . The king, perceiving the ecstacy of gladness, which even in that miserable condition pervaded the Great Being, and much wondering at it, again spoke to him:

'What good has Your Honor obtained, thus despising your own welfare and taking upon yourself the disaster which threatened others?" The Bodhisattva spoke: "Verily, my body is broken, O king, but my mind is come to a state of the greatest soundness, since I removed the distress of those over whom I exercised royal power for a long time. . . . With this kind of felicity proper to the holy kings of old and attainable by practising commiseration towards thy subjects, mayst thou be illustrious,

O king of men!"

> After thus instructing the king who, like a pupil, listened to him with devout attention and set a high value on his words, he left his body paralyzed in its functions by the excess of his pains, and mounted to Heaven.[1] .

There are some interesting comparisons to be made between the second century A.D. Sanskrit *Jātakamālā* and the more archaic Pāli version in *The Jātaka*. Both describe a distant and idyllic land, foreign to the ways of men, which is invaded by men seeking the wondrous fruit from the monkeys' tree. Angry that the monkeys should be eating these fruits, the king orders his archers to shoot the beasts. To save his frightened and endangered herd the Bodhisattva makes a bridge of his own body so that the herd may thus escape to the opposite bank of the river. But the stretching of the Bodhisattva's body in the *Jātakamālā* and in visual depictions following that text, describes a miracle: "And although that place could be reached only by many successive leaps, the Great Being, by dint of his surpassing heroism, passed across like a bird and held the spot. . . ." In *The Jātaka*, it is not so much by his great powers that the Bodhisattva was able to span the river (though this does play a part), as by his cleverness and wisdom that he figured the distance and aided himself by tying a bamboo rope to the banyan tree and also to his waist, to give him close to the distance needed. Because he could not quite hold the opposite tree firmly (in the Pāli version it is a tree, not a mountain which the herd tries to reach) his back was broken as the herd ran across. Also, the Pāli version (i.e., *The Jātaka*) has the Bodhisattva's evil cousin, Devadatta, deliver the final and most crushing blow. Devadatta is a recurring character and symbol of evil in *The Jātaka*, but not in the *Jātakamālā*.

Though the *Jātakamālā* version is told in more profuse language than is *The Jātaka*, both present a moral tale of the selfless love of a king for his dependents. This was a popular subject in Buddhist art.

The earliest extant depiction of the Mahākapi Jātaka is from Bhārhut (pl. 8).[2] It follows the Pāli version. In it, we see the herd rushing over the extended body of the Monkey King, whose tail is tied to a bamboo rope and lashed to the tree. At the top of the medallion relief, the monkey about to pounce on the Bodhisattva's back seems to be the evil cousin Devadatta. Below them, two figures hold a canopy on which to receive the wounded Monkey King. At lower center we see the Monkey King preaching to the king of men while the king holds his hands in a gesture of admiration.

Pl. 9. Journey to the monkey kingdom, assault on the monkeys, flight across the river, spreading the net, and discourse of the two kings.
The Mahākapi Jātaka, Stūpa 1 (Great Stūpa), Sāñcī, India, c. 1st cen. B.C. (sandstone).

Another early depiction is from Sāñcī (pl. 9). Again, a bamboo rope helps to extend the Bodhisattva's reach. He is considerably larger than the other monkeys, reflecting his heroic strength and virtue. At lower left are the king and his hunters. The upper section shows the monkeys crossing the river via their leader's bridge. As at Bhārhut, the river is indicated by wavy lines and fish on the surface plane. At center left, an archer takes aim at the monkeys. Above him, two men stand with a canopy to receive the Bodhisattva. At upper left, the two kings converse.

The Mahākapi Jātaka appears also in Ajantā Cave 17 and in several reliefs at Borobudur, Java.[3] In a Tibetan *tanka* painting in the St. Louis Museum, the Āryaśūra description is literally followed; the Monkey King's body stretches to an impossible length to span the river (see Bryner 1957, Tanka A, pl. XIV). A similar though not so exaggerated depiction can be seen at Qyzil in Central Asia (Foucher 1919:17, fig. 2*a*).

NOTES

1. *Jātakamālā*, Āryaśūra, pp. 244-53.

2. Cunningham 1879:106 and pl. XXXVIII(6). Cunningham did not recognize this as the Mahākapi Jātaka.

3. See Singh 1965*b*:127, pl. 59 and fig. 12, Cave 17. See also Krom 1927(1):376-77. Four reliefs on the first gallery depict the Monkey Jātaka from Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*.

Pl. 10. The Deer with his does, rescue of the man, betrayal, and preaching.

The Ruru Jātaka, Bhārhut, India, c. 2nd-early 1st cen. B.C. (red sandstone). Indian Museum, Calcutta.

The Ruru, or Mṛiga, Jātaka
(The Story of the Golden Ruru Deer)

One time the Bodhisattva, it is said, lived in the forest as a ruru-deer. He had his residence in a remote part of a large wilderness, far from the paths of men. . . . That ruru-deer was conspicuous by its hue brilliant like pure gold and the very soft hair of his body, which was moreover adorned and resplendent with spots of different lovely colors, shining like rubies, sapphires, emeralds and beryls. . . . knowing his body to be a much desirable object and being aware of the pitiless nature of man, he liked to frequent such forest tracks as were free from human intercourse. . . . Moreover, he warned also the animals who followed after him to avoid them. He exercised his rule over them like a teacher, like a father.

. . . Now once upon a time it happened that the Highminded One, residing in that wild part of the forest, heard cries for help uttered by some man who was being carried away by the current of a rapid stream flowing near and lately swollen by the rains.

. . . These piteous cries of distress struck the Bodhisattva, and as if he were wounded by them in his heart, he rushed out of the thicket, exclaiming those comforting words he had been wont to use in hundreds of previous existences and by which he had banished fear, grief, sadness, and fatigue. . . .

Then, resolved upon rescuing him and without minding the risk of his own life, he entered the river. . . .

He placed himself across [the way of the current], then told him to cling fast to him. And the man, who was in the paroxysm of fear and had almost lost the power of his limbs, his strength being exhausted, climbed on his back.

Nevertheless, though he was mounted by the man and forced out of his way by the violence of the current, the paramount excellence of his nature enabled him to keep his great vigor intact, and he reached the riverbank according to the wish of that man.

Having brought the man to the riverside . . . he warmed his cold limbs with the warmth of his own body, then dismissed him. "Go," he said, showing him the way.

This . . . touched the man to the quick. . . . Bowing his head to him, he addressed him with kind words like these:

"No friend from childhood nor kinsman is capable of performing such a deed as thou hast done for me. This life of mine, therefore, is thine. . . ."

In reply to this the Bodhisattva said approvingly:

. . . "Let thy grateful disposition not induce thee to relate to anybody that thou wast rescued by such an extraordinary animal. My beautiful figure makes me too desirable a prey. . . .

"Therefore, take care to guard both thy own good properties and me. A treacherous behavior towards a friend never tends to bliss.

". . . So then, thou wilt please me by doing as I said." And the man promised to do so, and after bowing to the Great Being and circumambulating him, set out for his home.[1]

Now at that time there lived in that country a queen of some king who saw true dreams. . . . One time, being asleep she . . . saw a ruru-deer of resplendent brilliancy, shining like a heap of jewels of every kind, standing on a throne and surrounded by the king and his assembly, preaching the Law in a human voice of an articulate and distinct sound. Affected with astonishment she awoke. . . . And she took the first opportunity to go and see the king. . . .

Then she . . . presented her lord with the account of that marvellous dream as with a gift of homage. When she had told her wonderful dream to the king, she added this earnest request:

"Therefore, my lord, pray endeavor to obtain that deer. . . ."

The king, who trusted by experience the visions of her dreams, readily complied with her desire. . Accordingly he ordered all his huntsmen to search for that deer, and had this proclamation made public in his capital day after day:

"There exists a deer gold skinned and spotted with various colors shining like hundreds of jewels. . . . Whosoever will show that deer, to him the king gives a very rich village and full ten lovely women."

Now the man (who had been rescued by the Bodhisattva) heard that proclamation again and again.

As he was poor, the reflection on the sufferings of poverty afflicted his heart, but on the other hand he kept in mind the great benefit he had received from the ruru-deer. Distracted by cupidity and gratitude, he was moved in both directions. . . . At last his mind disturbed by covetousness came to this conclusion. "If I have once obtained great wealth," so he thought, "I shall be able by means of these riches to gain, while enjoying the pleasures of this world, also happiness in the other world, being intent on honoring my kinsmen and friends, guests and mendicants." Having so resolved, putting out of his mind the benefit of the ruru-deer, he went up to the king and said: "I, Your Majesty, know that excellent deer and his dwelling place. Pray, tell me to whom I shall show him." On hearing this, the king much rejoiced answered him, "Well, friend, show him to myself". . . . Conducted by the man, he went to the aforesaid riverside. Then he encircled the forest . . . and surrounded by a select number of resolute and faithful men, entered the thicket, being shown the way by that man. As they went onward the man . . . showed him to the king, exclaiming, "Here, here is that precious deer, Your Majesty. . . ."

So saying he raised his arm, eager as he was to point at the deer, and lo, his hand fell down off his arm, as if it had been cut off with a sword.

. . . The Bodhisattva, on hearing the noise of people on every side, had thereby concluded that he must have been surrounded, to be sure. . . . Then he uttered distinct articulate language, addressing the king in a human voice.

"Stop a moment, mighty prince, do not hit me, hero among men! Pray, first satisfy my curiosity, and tell me this. Who may have discovered my abode to thee, far as it is from the paths of men. . . ?"

The king . . . showed him that man with the point of his arrow. . . . But the Bodhisattva knowing again that man, spoke disapprovingly: "Fie upon him!"

> ". . . In this manner he returns that exertion made in his behalf! How is it that he did not see that he destroyed his own happiness, too, at that same time?"
>
> . . .
>
> "He whom I, moved by pity, rescued, when he was carried off by the current, is the man who made this danger arise for me." . . .
>
> Then the king, casting on that man a stern look expressive of harsh reproach, asked him: "Oh, in truth, wast thou rescued before from such a distress by this deer?" And the man, who was pale and perspired with fear, sorrow, and dejection, answered in a low tone of shame: "Yes, I was." Upon which the king revilingly exclaimed: "Fie upon thee!" . . .
>
> With these words he grasped his bow in the middle and bent it in order to kill him. But the Bodhisattva . . . [said] to the king: "Stop, Your Majesty, stop, do not strike one already stricken!"
>
> . . . This merciful and sincere desire to reward even the man who had ill-treated him excited the highest surprise of the king . . . he exclaimed: . . .
>
> "Verily, showing such mercy to him whose cruel offence against thee is evident, thou art a human being by thy properties, we do bear but the shape of men." . . .
>
> . . . Then the king made the ruru-deer mount his royal chariot, worshipping him like his teacher, and led him with great pomp to his capital. And having given him the reception due to a guest and invited him to place himself on the royal throne, he with his wives and the whole retinue of his officers exhorted him to preach the Law [on mercy].
>
> . . . Then the king praised these words of the ruru-deer, and with his townsmen and landsmen became intent on acting up to the Law of Righteousness. . . .[2]

As with the two Mahākapi (Great Monkey) Jātaka accounts, Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* (above) and *The Jātaka* (Cowell, vol. 4, pp. 161-66, trans. Rouse) present some interesting differences in their narration of the Golden Deer story. Language in the Āryaśūra

account generally is more ornate and flows more gracefully than in *The Jātaka*. This is both because *The Jātaka* was composed over a long period of time, blending disparate elements in its prose and verse, and because the unornamented quality was favored by the Hīnayānist compilers. The *Jātakamālā* was composed by a single individual in the current Sanskrit style of poetry, which harmonized with the growing Mahāyānist interest in luxuriant, rhapsodic imagery.

The deer of *The Jātaka* account is described as being exquisite, but his features are not supernaturally distinctive the way they are in the *Jātakamālā*. Visually, these differences are seen when we compare a Tun-Huang painting, where the deer appears in a brilliantly jewelled coat, with the Bhārhut relief, in which the animal, although beautifully shaped, is very simply rendered (pl. 10).[3] Possibly a jewelled coat on the Bhārhut deer was indicated by paint, but, because *The Jātaka* account makes no mention of any such miraculous markings, the deer was probably simply highlighted in yellow or gold.

The character of the rescued man differs significantly in the two texts. In *The Jātaka*, he is the son of a wealthy man who has squandered his fortune and lived a dissolute life. None of the doubts which torment the man in the Āryaśūra account afflict the man of *The Jātaka*: he does not hesitate to inform the king about the deer. His deed is, in a sense, rationalized by mentioning his irresponsible past, but the character is really two-dimensional. The fears, uncertainty, and shame which make the man so vivid and sympathetic in the Āryaśūra account are completely missing from *The Jātaka*. Pāli accounts generally relate events in a somewhat austere, impersonal manner; Āryaśūra and other Mahāyānist writers tend to include a psychological dimension to add color and human immediacy to their stories. And yet, the man does not lose his hand in the Pāli account, and the deer specifically requests that the man be given his village and women; the Āryaśūra text implies the man was lucky to lose only his hand and could not hope to gain the promised reward.

This Jātaka was a popular subject in Buddhist art. Among its many representations are examples from Bhārhut, Gandhāra, and Ajantā Cave 17 in India, Borobuḍur in Java, and Tun-Huang in China (pl. 10).[4] It also appears in several texts besides *The Jātaka* and *Jātakamālā* of India.[5] Excerpts from one of these other texts, a Khotanese account found at Tun-Huang, follow:

> A human being, drowning miserably, cried out and screamed in great distress. You yourself in that forest were an antelope, very beautiful, brilliant like a heap of precious stones.

At the sight your heart turned strongly towards him in compassion. You descended into the stream for the sake of the hapless drowning man, with hard effort, with strong exertion, by your heroism, so that thus you brought him to the dry bank.

Thus you spoke to him: "O man, if it has seemed good to you that you died not in the water, but gained your dear life, report not at all my fame and name in gratitude. Accept my food and lodgings. Such is my supplication."

The man however brought your killers. Thereby the man lost, O Buddha, his hands. As the ruru-deer you did a wondrous deed. Therefore, I bow down to you with faith and reverence.[6]

The compassion and mercy of the Bodhisattva, alluded to in these two Mahāyānist texts (Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* and the Tun-Huang *Jātakastava*), is further developed and stressed in another group of Jātakas, to be examined in the discussion of Jātakas exemplifying Mahāyānist perfection.

NOTES

1. Circumambulation, encircling and walking around a revered object, is a very ancient form of worship in India. In early Buddhism, *stūpa*s, or mounds enshrined with a relic, were the objects most frequently circumambulated.

2. *Jātakamālā*, Āryaśūra, pp. 234-44.

3. See Tun-huang 1959, pls. 6-9 (Cave 257); and de Silva 1967:77, pl. detail. See also Cunningham 1879:51-52, pl. XXV(1). The inscription reads "Mriga [Miga] [Antelope] Jātaka."

4. See note 3 for Tun-huang and Bhārhut references. For Gandhāran examples, see Foucher 1919:19, pl. IV(2). For the Ajantā Cave 17 painting, see Singh 1965*b*:124, pl. 57 and fig. 11. For the four Deer Jātaka reliefs of Borobudur, see Krom 1927(1):372-75.

5. The Golden Deer Jātaka is included in the Tibetan *Kañjur*, Rockhill, pp. 1-3. It also appears in China as part of the Tripiṭaka (Sacred Books of the Pāli Canon) in the *Lieou Tou Tsi King* (see Chavannes 1910-1934[4]:122).

6. *Jātakastava*, Khotanese, p. 430. Reprinted by permission of the American Philosophical Society and Mark J. Dresden.

GIVING OF LIFE, LIMB, AND LOVED ONES:

JĀTAKAS EXEMPLIFYING THE MAHĀYĀNIST PERFECTION OF TOTAL CHARITY AND GENEROSITY

(*Dāna Pāramitā*)

The first, and chief, of the Mahāyānist *Pāramitās* [Perfections; Ideal Virtues], was *Dāna Pāramitā* [Perfection of Giving] (Dayal 1932:172). Such tales as the Ruru (Deer) and Mahākapi (Monkey) Jātakas in a sense demonstrated *dāna*, but, for the Mahāyānists, *dāna* was most admirably shown in the cheerful giving of limbs as well as life. In the Ruru Jātaka, the deer risks his life to save a man's life; in the Mahākapi Jātaka, the chief gives his life to save his herd. In both cases the action was based on the practical necessity of saving endangered lives; in neither case is the sacrifice so joyously embraced by the victim as it is in the Ṣaḍdanta (Elephant), Śibi, Vyāghrī-Mahāsattva (Tigress), and Viśvāntara Jātakas. These four Jātakas are included in this section as important representations of the genre.

The great elephant in the Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka willingly gives his tusks at the whim of a jealous former wife. King Śibi openly, even rapturously, welcomes assorted birds, beasts, and human petitioners to partake of his flesh. The ascetic-prince of the Vyāghrī-Mahāsattva Jātaka gladly seizes an opportunity to offer his body as food to a starving tigress and cubs. Prince Viśvāntara's chief joy and direction in life is to give anything asked of him, including his wife and children.

The cult of piety which these stories exemplify grew rapidly with the rise and spread of Mahāyāna Buddhism. These four Jātakas were great Mahāyānist favorites, demonstrating the Mahāyānist emphasis on *dāna* (giving) based solely on a feeling of compassion (*karuṇā*). The goal of the Hīnayānist, which must be striven for by intensive personal effort and meditation, is Enlightenment. The Mahāyānist places charity and compassion towards others above all things, even above Enlightenment (Dayal 1932:3-4). This Mahāyānist emphasis appealed to both "high" and "low" Buddhism: to both the monastic class, because of the new doctrinal emphasis

on self-sacrifice and charity as being necessary for becoming a bodhisattva, and to the popular audience, because of the colorfulness and emotional immediacy of such tales.

But neither this emphasis on compassion nor tales such as these are uniquely Buddhist. Parallels exist in Christian stories, where we find martyrs whose breasts were cut off, whose eyes were gouged out, who were dismembered and roasted, or who, like the Christ, were crucified.[1] Throughout these horrors, the Bodhisattva and also the Christian martyrs maintained equanimity and religious purity. For the naive man, the very definition of a great saint is a being having extreme compassion and able to withstand the most atrocious of sufferings. Someone willing to take the sins of the world upon himself, to give his body that others might live, or to patiently and even joyfully bear personal torture, mutilation, and other great agonies must be very holy indeed.

To modern sensibilities, the psychological types represented in these stories may seem perverse and their actions not particularly admirable. The mutilation and "morbid" dwelling on bloody details may even impress us as somewhat absurd and disgusting. But it is important to bear in mind their significance to the popular religious imagination when life was cruel, the divine was vivid, and violence more visible than it presently is.

NOTES

1. Fox 1806 (orig. 1504) and Gallonio 1591 (trans. Allinson 1903). See, for example, Gallonio, p. 227, eyes dug out with daggers; p. 134, dismemberment and roasting in a frying pan. This section, like the book as a whole, is meticulous and fastidious in detail: there is considerable speculation on whether the pan was generally round or oval, and how the pie pieces were fit in and held down for roasting; see p. 184, breasts, hands, feet, and tongue cut off of Virgins Anastasia and Basilissa.

   In the publisher's preface to the Gallonio book (pp. viii-ix), we are told that both it and Fox's book enjoyed enormous vogue in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Pl. 11. Ṣaḍdanta removes his tusks and presents them to the hunter, return of the hunter, and presentation of the tusks to the swooning queen.

The Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka, Ajantā, Cave 17, India, late 5th cen. (wall painting, det.).

The Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka
(The Story of the Great Elephant)

Once upon a time . . . the Bodhisattva came to life as the son of the chief elęphant. He was a pure white, with red feet and face . . . and tusks . . . emitting six-colored rays. He was the chief of a herd of eight thousand elephants. . . . His two head queens were Cullasubhaddā and Mahāsubhaddā. . . . [Cullasubhaddā, feeling that her lord favored Mahāsubhaddā, vowed vengeance upon him, saying:] "Hereafter, when I pass hence, may I be reborn as the royal maiden Subhaddā in the Madda king's family, and on coming of age may I attain to the dignity of queen consort to the king of Benares. Then I shall be dear and charming in his eyes, and in a position to do what I please. So I will speak to the king and send a hunter with a poisoned arrow to wound and slay this elephant. And thus may I be able to have brought to me a pair of his tusks that emit six-colored rays." . . . [Cullasubhaddā was reborn as she desired, a favorite of the king of Benares. Feigning illness, she announced to the king that nothing could cure her but the tusks of this white elephant. At the king's command, hunters were sent out to find the elephant. After seven years, seven months, and seven days, a hunter discovered the Great Being in his forests, and taking his poisoned arrow:]

> And as the elephant passed by,
> A mighty shaft the wretch let fly.
> The wounded beast loud roared with pain. . . .

[The hunter then explained he was only doing the queen's bidding. Recognizing this to be the work of Cullasubhaddā, he bore his sufferings patiently and said:]

> . . . "Rise, hunter, and or ere I die,
> Saw off these tusks of ivory:
> Go bid the shrew be of good cheer,
> "The beast is slain; his tusks are here."
>
> . . .
>
> The hunter then the tusks did saw
> From out that noble creature's jaw,
> And with his shining, matchless prize
> Home with all speed he quickly flies.

[The hunter then returned with the tusks to the queen.] . . . Now in offering them to the queen,

> he said, "Lady, the elephant, against whom you conceived a grudge in your heart for a trifling offence, has been slain by me." "Do you tell me that he is dead?" she cried. . . . And at the rememberance of the Great Being she was filled with so great sorrow that she could not endure it, but her heart then and there was broken and that very day she died.[1]

In his study of the Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka, Alfred Foucher (1917*b*) has noted that the sequential versions of such narratives tend to continually outdo one another in the direction of increasing edification. Emotional intensity and grandeur are accentuated in successive accounts; the generosity of the elephant and the graphic depictions of agony and gore are perhaps absurd and nauseating to modern sensibilities, but for the empathetic believer, such stories would have stirred vivid pain and glory. We will note the same tendency in the Śibi and Tigress Jātakas.

In the verse stanzas of *The Jātaka*, which predate the fifth-century prose commentary, the hunter cuts off the tusks (see verses above). This is shown at Bhārhut, Amarāvatī, Gandhāra, and Ajantā Cave 10.[2] But, by the time of *The Jātaka* prose commentary, the elephant has assumed a size commensurate with his holiness, so that the hunter cannot reach him to perform his task: the victim himself must do it. Not only does he allow his own slaughter, but actively assists in it:

> Now the elephant, being like a mountain eighty cubits high, was but ineffectually cut [by the hunter's saw]. For the man could not reach his tusks. So the Great Being, bending his body towards him, lay with his head down. Then the hunter . . . thrust the saw into his mouth. The Great Being suffered excruciating pain and his mouth was charged with blood. The hunter, shifting about from place to place, was still unable to cut the tusks with his saw. So the Great Being letting the blood drip from his mouth, resigning himself to the agony, asked, saying, "Sir, cannot you cut them?" And on his saying "No," he recovered his presence of mind and said, "Well then, since I myself have not strength enough to raise my trunk, do you lift it up for me and let me seize the end of the saw." The hunter did so: and the Great Being seized the saw with his trunk and moved it backwards and forwards, and the tusks were cut off as it were sprouts. Then bidding him take the tusks, he said, "I don't give you these, friend hunter, because I do not value them, . . .

> but the tusks of omniscience are a hundred thousand times dearer to me than these are, and may this meritorious act be to me the cause of attaining Omniscience."[3]

The more exaggerated versions of generosity are not always far removed in time from the simpler. Roughly contemporary with the Gandhāran sculpture mentioned above (depicting the simpler, more archaic version in which the hunter cuts the tusks himself), is the *Sūtralāṃkāra* (*Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* of Kumāralāta). In that text, it is simply by slipping his trunk around his tusks that the elephant pulls them out, inflicting pain upon himself, while the hunter respectfully waits for him to present them. The hunter here does not even assist. In an Ajantā Cave 17 painting (pl. 11), he has already torn out one tusk and is about to twist and pull out the other, following the *Sūtralāṃkāra* description.[4] In a much later account, the *Kalpadrumāvadānamālā*, from no earlier than the sixth century A.D., the elephant himself again directly participates in his own slaughter, by breaking his tusks off against a rock.[5] In the *Jātakastava*, the agony of removing the tusks is not even mentioned: only the Bodhisattva's joy at giving (*dāna*) is emphasized:

> . . .
> When therefore a hunter came who asked
> for the tusks, even for one moment you
> did not hesitate, O good being; out of
> your own mouth, in a cleft, you
> pulled them, with heroism.
>
> As a man plucks lotuses from the *Hamavaṃda*
> mountain, happy, contented, compassionate, by
> your own blow, the jewels which were your
> teeth you gave away at once, since you feared
> extremely lest his wish not be fulfilled.
>
> At all times you shall be my best teacher,
> you shall be my refuge, you shall be my salvation,
> O gracious one. In the whole world, for all living
> beings in the land, there is no refuge save you.
> Great are your strength and heart.[6]

Several depictions of the Ṣaddanta Jātaka survive from Southeast Asia, including a terra-cotta relief from Pagān and a stucco fragment from Thailand (Ko 1909:136; Bowie 1972:62, pl. 27). Both limit the visual narrative to a seated hunter facing the wounded elephant. It is unclear whether the hunter is waiting for the beast to sink to his knees so that he may cut the tusks, or if the elephant is about to pull out his tusks and present them to the hunter. The scene does not appear at Borobudur on any of its series of reliefs; this is surprising, considering the great

popularity of the Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka in Buddhist literature (Krom 1927:399).

There must once have been many depictions of the Elephant Jātaka in China. Though the visual representations no longer exist, a number of texts do. The Jātaka appears in the *Sūtralaṃkāra* (*Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* of Kumāralāta, translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva, c. 405 A.D.), the *Tsa-pao-tsang-ching* [121 Avadānas] (Northern Wei period, 386-534 A.D.), and the *Ta-che-tu-lun* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtraśāstra* of Nāgārjuna; see Mukherji 1931:35-37).

An interesting variant on the Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka appears in the Chinese *Fo-pen-hing-king* (*Abhinishkramaṇasūtra*). Here, it is not the jealous queen who desires the elephant's six tusks, but hunters capture him for King Brahmadatta to ride. In this account, the elephant king's devotion to his parents is stressed, which must have had particular appeal to the sense of filial piety held by the Chinese:

> . . . Now, this young elephant, having grown up to its full size, was so piously endowed that it even fetched food and other necessaries for its parents, so that it would never touch anything to eat himself till they had first been supplied. And so it happened that on one occasion, having wandered rather far in search of food, this elephant was seen by a certain chief of hunters, who having set eyes on him thought thus: "An elephant like this none ought to ride but King Brahmadatta himself." . . . No sooner had he come near than the trappers enclosed him in their snare, and having safely bound him, they brought him at once to Brahmadatta Rāja.
>
> . . . Then the king himself proceeded to feed and provide for the animal, using every kind of endearing gesture and attention. Nevertheless, the elephant did nothing but sigh and moan and weep. King Brahmadatta, seeing this, and wondering at it, came and stood in front of the creature, and, clasping his hands together in a token of respect, spoke to it thus: "I have given you every kind of choice food . . . and I have treated you with the utmost gentleness, and yet I see that your heart is so sad. . . . How is it that you are so sorrowful! . . . On this the young elephant told him how he had been accustomed to feed his father and mother, . . . [and how it grieved and worried him to be parted from them. When the king heard this, he gave him his freedom, saying:] "Go, . . .

nourish and cherish thy parents as in duty bound,
I would rather lose my life, and end it now, than
cause thee and them the grief of separation."[7]

NOTES

1. *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 5, pp. 20-31, trans. Francis. There is some confusion in the various texts as to the tusks: whether there are two emitting "six-colored rays" or six, emitting "various colored rays." The original meaning of the six tusks or six rays is itself unclear: a universal monarch is said to possess such a rare elephant as a white, six-tusked animal. The Bodhisattva takes the form of such an animal in his descent into Māyā's womb (see "Birth of the Buddha and his Seven Steps" episode below). The six-tusked elephant is as the sun, whose course in the sky is run during a year with six seasons. The six tusks may also be a misunderstanding of a phrase denoting "one who has the six organs of sense under control" (see Dayal 1932:296).

2. See Foucher (1917*b*, pls. XXIX-XXX) for Bhārhut, Amarāvatī, Gandhāran, and Ajantā Cave 17 depictions. See Singh (1965*a*:99 and fig. 8) for the Ajantā Cave 10 depiction. The Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka also appears at Sāñcī, but the hunter is seen only at the extreme right, aiming his arrow at the elephant; there is no scene involving the removal of the tusks (see Marshall and Foucher, n.d., vol. 2, pl. XV[2]).

3. *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 5, pp. 28-29, trans. Francis.

4. Foucher seems to have been unclear on the date of the *Sūtralāṃkāra* [Sūtra ornament] but did know it was ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa by the Chinese and translated into Chinese by 410 A.D. Winternitz (1933[2]:267) points out that the *Sūtralāṃkāra* was actually by a junior contemporary of Aśvaghoṣa, Kumāralāta, and bore the title *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* or *Kalpanālaṃkṛitikā* [A series of examples adorned by poetic invention].

5. Foucher describes this from the *Kalpadrumāvadānamālā* but says nothing of its date. Winternitz (1933[2]:290-91) ascribes it by its literary type to the sixth century A.D. or later.

6. *Jātakastava*, Khotanese, pp. 423-24. Reprinted by permission of the American Philosophical Society and Mark J. Dresden. Dresden (p. 447) gives an extensive listing of Pāli, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Central Asian texts which include the Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka. The *Jātakastava* of Jñānayaśas (p. 25), as mentioned above, has different contents than the (Khotanese) Tun-Huang *Jātakastava*. In the Jñānayaśas version, the agony and bloodiness of the sacrifice is emphasized rather than the contentment of the Bodhisattva at his deed.

7. *Abhinishkramaṇasūtra*, pp. 366-67; and Cunningham 1879:64.

Pl. 12. Cutting and weighing of the flesh.

The Śibi Jātaka, Gandhāra, India, c. 2nd cen. (stone). The British Museum, London.

The Śibi Jātaka

Numerous tales of the unlimited altruism of the good King Śibi are known to us from literary accounts and monuments in Asia. All describe the offering of his own body so that others might thrive; he is the model of perfect charity and selflessness. Of these stories, the one best known in literature describes the sacrifice of Śibi's eyes. The account from *The Jātaka* follows:

> Once upon a time, when the mighty King Śibi reigned in the city of Ariṭṭhapura in the kingdom of Śibi, the Great Being was born as his son. They called his name Prince Śibi. . . . At his father's death he became king himself, and, forsaking the ways of evil, he kept the Ten Royal Virtues and ruled in righteousness. . . . He was munificent in distributing each day six hundred thousand pieces of money. . . .
>
> Once on the day of the full moon . . . he sat on the royal throne thinking over the gifts he had given. Thought he to himself, "Of all outside things there is nothing I have not given; but this kind of giving does not content me. I want to give something which is a part of myself. . . . I vow that if any one ask . . . what is part of myself,--if he should mention my very heart . . . I will pull forth my heart dripping with blood-clots and give it to him . . . [and] should any men demand my eyes, I will tear out my eyes and give them. . . ."
>
> Sakra, perceiving his resolution, thought, "King Śibi has determined to give his eyes to any chance comer who may ask. . . ." He determined to try him; and, in the form of a brahmin old and blind, he posted himself on a high place, and when the king came to his alms-hall he stretched out his hand and stood crying . . . "O great king! in all the inhabited world there is no spot where the fame of your munificent heart has not sounded. I am blind and you have two eyes." Then he repeated the first stanza, asking for an eye:
>
> "To ask an eye the old man comes from
> far, for I have none:
> O give me one of yours, I pray, then
> we shall each have one."
>
> And the king recited . . . :

. . .

"One eye thou didst request of me:
behold I give thee two!"

. . .

Then the courtiers asked, "What do you desire in giving your eyes? . . ." The king answered them in a stanza:

"In giving thus, not glory is my goal,
Not sons, not wealth, or kingdoms to control:
This is the good old way of holy men;
Of giving gifts enamoured is my soul."

To the Great Being's words the courtiers answered nothing; so the Great Being addressed Sīvaka the surgeon in a stanza:

"A friend and comrade, Sīvaka, art thou:
Do as I bid thee--thou hast skill enow--
Take out my eyes, for this is my desire,
And in the beggar's hands bestow them now."

. . . The pain was extreme, blood was trickling, the king's garments were stained with blood. . . . Sakra [taking the eyes] departed from the king's palace, and then from the city, with the gaze of the multitude upon him, went away to the world of gods.

. . . "I will offer the king a boon," thought [Sakra]. . . . So to [the palace] he [soon returned].

. . . Sakra said, "Though they call me Sakra, king of the gods, your majesty, yet I cannot give an eye to any one else; but by the fruit of the gift by thee given, and by nothing else, your eye shall be restored to you." Then the other repeated a stanza, maintaining that his gift was well given:

'Whatever sort, whatever kind of suitor
shall draw near,
Whoever comes to ask of me, he to my heart is dear:
If these my solemn words be true, now
let my eye[s] appear!"

. . .

On the instant appeared his . . . eye[s]. But these eyes of his were neither natural nor divine . . . these eyes are called the eyes of Truth Absolute and Perfect. . . .

> . . . Then [the king] said, "O people of Śibi! now you have beheld these divine eyes, never eat food without giving something away!" . . .
>
> . . . Hearing which, the people gave alms and did good deeds, and went to swell the hosts of heaven.[1]

Though the "Sacrifice of Eyes" is the only tale of Śibi's generosity described in what are the two main extant bodies of Jātaka literature (*The Jātaka* and Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*), this rarely is the version chosen for visual monuments. The "Sacrifice of Eyes" does occasionally appear in Tibetan art, and at Borobuḍur in the series of reliefs specifically based on the *Jātakamālā*, but much more frequent are depictions of the "Sacrifice to Ransom a Dove," which has taken refuge with Śibi.[2] It is described in the *Jātakastava* of Jñānayaśas, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Sūtralāṃkāra* (*Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* by Kumāralāta), and the *Kathāsaritsāgara*.[3] The full account from the *Kathāsaritsāgara* follows.

> So in former times there was a king named Śibi, self-denying, compassionate, generous, resolute, the protector of all creatures; and in order to beguile him Indra [Sakra] assumed the shape of a hawk, and swiftly pursued Dharma [god of justice], who by magic had transformed himself into a dove. The dove in terror went and took refuge in the bosom of Śibi. Then the hawk addressed the king with a human voice: "O king, this is my natural food; surrender the dove to me, for I am hungry. Know that my death will immediately follow if you refuse my prayer; in that case where will be your righteousness?" Then Śibi said to the god: "This creature has fled to me for protection, and I cannot abandon it, therefore I will give you an equal weight of some other kind of flesh." The hawk said: "If this be so, then give me your own flesh." The king, delighted, consented to do so. But as fast as he cut off his flesh and threw it on the scale, the dove seemed to weigh more and more in the balance. Then the king threw his whole body on to the scale, and thereupon a celestial voice was heard: "Well done! This is equal in weight to the dove." Then Indra [Sakra] and Dharma abandoned the form of hawk and dove and, being highly pleased, restored the body of King Śibi whole as before, and after bestowing on him many other blessings they both disappeared. . . .[4]

The "Sacrifice to Ransom a Dove" appears to have been very popular in Buddhist Asia, judging from surviving examples in India,

Pl. 13. Śibi steps onto the scales.

The Śibi Jātaka, Ajantā, Cave 1, India, late 5th cen. (wall painting, det.).

Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and China. Several reliefs from Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa depict it, and a painted version appears in Ajantā Cave 1 (pl. 13).[5] It was known in Kushan Mathurā and Gandhāra, as evidenced in the jamb from Bhūtēsar and a British Museum Gandhāran piece (pl. 12).[6] A particularly interesting representation of it is found at Qyzil in Central Asia (Foucher 1919: 17[*b*, *c*]). Borobuḍur includes it among its Jātaka and Avadāna reliefs, and it was especially popular in China. Several paintings of it survive at Tun-Huang.[7]

All of these "Sacrifice to Ransom a Dove" depictions show Śibi at the scales with his flesh being cut. Usually the dove is visible: by Śibi's foot in the Gandhāran example (pl. 12), on his knee in the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and Ajantā scenes (not shown in the detail of pl. 13), and on the scale at Bhūtēsar, Qyzil, and Tun-Huang Cave 85. The hawk appears in the Borobuḍur scene amidst the trees, on the capital in the Bhūtēsar relief, and at the feet of Śibi in the Qyzil painting. It is unclear in the British Museum Gandhāran piece if the damaged figure above the scales represents the hawk. Sakra, recognizable by his squared crown, appears by the scales of the British Museum piece and in the clouds at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and Ajantā Cave 1 (pls. 12 and 13). Possibly the robed figure behind the scales in the Tun-Huang Cave 85 example also represents Sakra.

Probably the most gruesome and yet naive representation of it is the Qyzil painting; Śibi's flesh has been cut to the bones along his arms and legs, but his hands and feet are uncut, making them appear like fleshy gloves and boots!

Though less commonly known in literature and art than the "Sacrifice of Eyes" and the "Ransom of a Dove," several other stories exist of Śibi's great charity. The *Avadānaśataka* (no. 34) of the second century A.D., thought to be the earliest of the Avadāna books, tells of Śibi's gift to the mosquitoes and flies.[8] Śibi invites the small insects to feed upon his blood; he even cuts away his skin to allow the blood to flow more freely and quickly to the eager insects. Just as in the "Sacrifice of Eyes" and "Ransom of a Dove," Sakra sees this and decides to test the extent of Śibi's generosity. He appears as a vulture ready to pounce, but once again Śibi's total love for his fellow creatures is demonstrated, as he invites the predator to take whatever it likes of his flesh. Both of these episodes, as well as that of the "Sacrifice of Eyes" and "Ransom of a Dove," are depicted at Borobuḍur.[9]

In both the Tibetan *Dulva* (Vinaya) and the *Avadānakalpalatā*, the story is told of a violent epidemic ravaging the country.[10] Physicians declared that the sick could be cured only by drinking the blood of a totally good man, who had never yielded to anger. Śibi, being that man, gave of his blood and thus ended the plague.

All of the above Śibi stories demonstrate the ideal of total altruism, but there is one, included in the *Avadānakalpalatā* and perhaps authored by Kṣemendra, which has a somewhat different tone. As a recompense for the recitation of a few beautiful verses, Śibi feeds an ogre (again, Sakra) with his flesh and blood.[11] The tale portrays yet another instance of Śibi's great generosity, but here the joyousness of the victim is not purely through his own benevolence; rather, he has been seduced by beauty into inviting the ogre to partake of him. The faintly erotic quality of all the sacrifices of Śibi is here even stronger. Perhaps this is a clue that the ogre story is purely Mahāyānist in invention and date, emphasizing further the fervidly sentimental character of the Mahāyānist cult of the compassionate Bodhisattva.

Śibi continually gives of his body, mutilating himself in ways savored by the authors and the faithful. However, by the purity of his heart and totality of his willingness to give himself totally (*karuṇā*) he is continually restored.[12] Had there been a shade of doubt or thoughts of pride and heavenly reward, we suspect that Śibi would have bled to death.

The sacrifice is all the more appealing and comforting because it is perennial and cyclical: Śibi always sacrifices himself to any that ask, and he is always restored. His story has a greater lyricism than that of the austerly noble Monkey King (Mahākapi Jātaka) who dies only once, albeit admirably. Such Jātakas as the Mahākapi were not abandoned with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, but they were not nearly so popular as the more sentimental tales of total compassion for all creatures.

NOTES

1. *The Jātaka*, Cowell, vol. 4, pp. 250-56, trans. Rouse.

2. See, for the "Sacrifice of Eyes," Bryner 1957, pl. II, tanka II; and Krom 1927(1):320. See also Ko 1909:135-36, pl. XLIX.

3. The "Sacrifice to Ransom a Dove" appears in the *Jātakastava*, Jñānayaśas, p. 26 (a reference to the "Sacrifice of Eyes" also appears on p. 26); the *Mahābhārata* (see Lévi 1908, esp. pp. 146-49, no. 64); and the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, Somadeva, vol. 1, p. 84.

4. *Kathāsaritsāgara*, Somadeva, vol. 1, p. 84. Reprinted by permission of Chas. J. Sawyer, Ltd., London.

5. For Amarāvatī reliefs depicting the "Ransom of a Dove," see Fergusson 1868, pls. LX and LXXXIII; and Sivaramamurti 1956, pl. 28, fig. 1. It is depicted also at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa (see Longhurst 1938, pl. XLII).

6. For the Bhūtēsar jamb, see Bachhofer 1929(2), pl. 94; and Vogel 1909:156.

   Originally identified as the "Śibi Jātaka," the British Museum piece has been changed to the "Sarvamdadāvadāna," on the basis of Sivaramamurti's article about a similar sculpture from Amarāvatī (Sivaramamurti 1956:228-30). Sivaramamurti does not seem to be aware of any Śibi Jātaka (or Śibi Avadāna) other than the "Sacrifice of Eyes." But, the Sarvamdadāvadāna (Kṣemendra's *Avadānakalpalatā*, no. 55) describes events identical to those of the "Sacrifice to Ransom a Dove" of the Śibi Jātaka quoted above, except that Sakra, rather than being disguised as a hawk, is a hunter and the king is known as Sarvamdada ("giver of all"). Because the differences between

the two are so minor, with the Śibi king here specifically named for Generosity and the pursuer human rather than animal, I suspect that the Sarvamdada story grew out of the more well-known Śibi Jātaka.

The Amarāvatī example discussed by Sivaramamurti clearly includes hunters; the British Museum piece lacks the weaponry seen at Amarāvatī, but the two simply dressed figures by the king may be hunters. However, the damaged figure above the scales in the British Museum piece may represent the hawk, rather than a second reference to the dove. If so, the British Museum piece represents the Śibi Jātaka, rather than the Sarvamdadāvadāna.

Most accounts of the "Rescue of a Dove" specifically name Śibi as the protector of a dove from a hawk (*Kathāsaritsāgara*, *Jātakastava* of Jñānayaśas, *Sūtralāṃkāra* [no. 64]). A few mention only the dove's (or pigeon's) rescue (the Khotanese [Tun-Huang] *Jātakastava* and the *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā*, p. 23) and thus could refer to whichever version, Śibi or Sarvamdada, was best known in its region. Because the *Sūtralāṃkāra* was written in the general region and era of the British Museum piece, the sculpture may follow the literary account in being a tale of King Śibi and the dove.

7. Borobuḍur reliefs 159 and 160, first gallery, balustrade, top series, depict the offering to the mosquitoes and to the vulture. Relief 56, first gallery, chief wall, lowest series, depicts the "Ransom of a Dove": the hawk can be seen in a tree by the king. Relief no. 7, first gallery, balustrade, top series, represents the "Sacrifice of Eyes," though the actual gouging out is not represented. See Krom 1927(1):275-77, 319-22, 422-23.

   Both Cave 275 (Northern Wei dynasty) and Cave 85 (T'ang dynasty) at Tun-Huang contain paintings of the "Ransom of a Dove." See Tun-huang wên-we yen-chiu-so 1959, pls. 1 and 186.

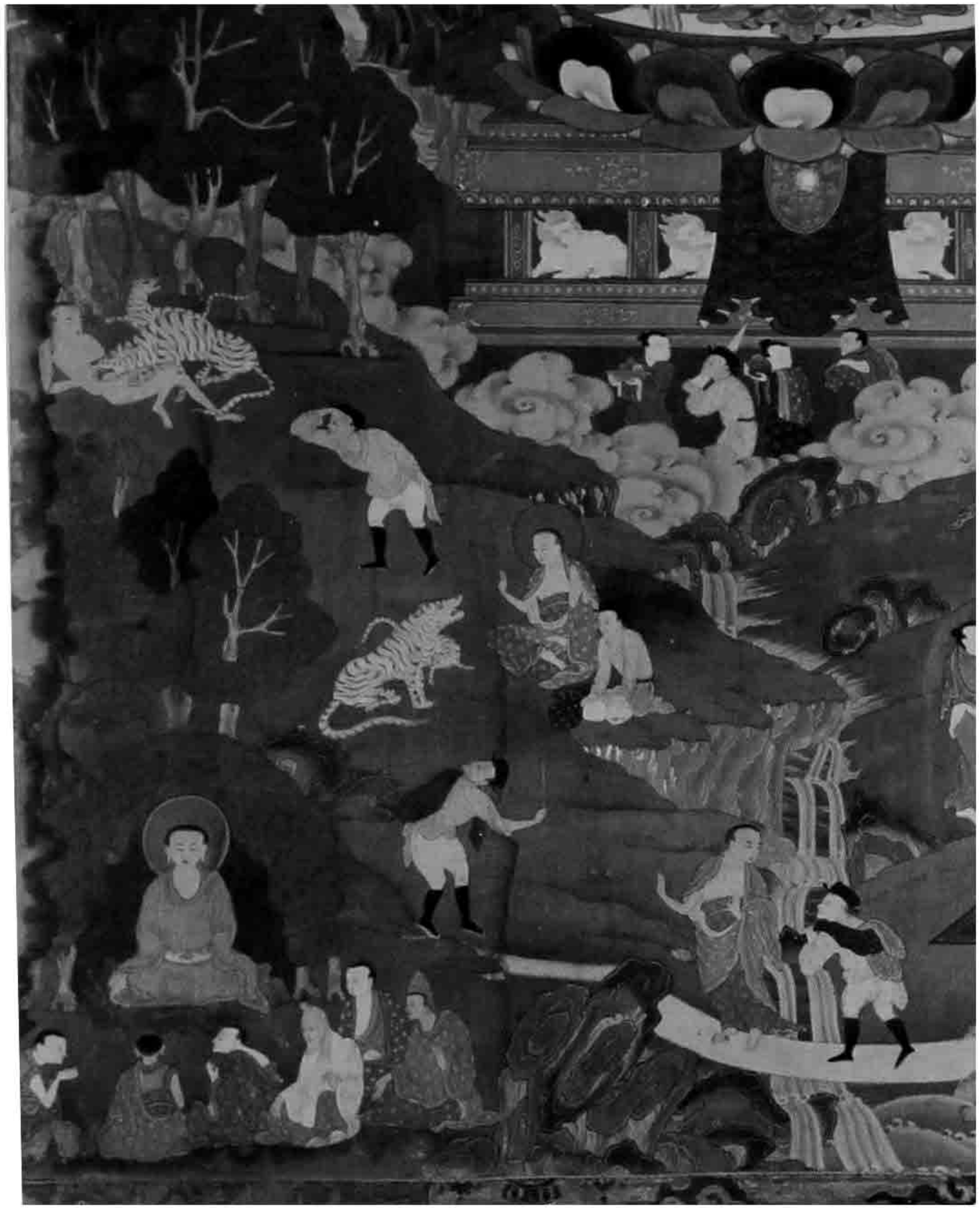
8. The *Avadānaśataka*, Speyer, no. 34. The *Avadānaśataka* was translated into French by M. Leon Feer. Epsiode 34 tells of the gift to insects, to a vulture, and the gift of eyes (respectively); following these three demonstrations of gencrosity, Sakra declares that Śibi will obtain perfect Enlightenment.

9. See note 7.

10. For the sacrifice of blood, see Kṣemendra's *Avadānakalpalatā* and *Kañjur*, Rockhill.

11. In Kṣemendra's first story of Śibi, the king encounters an ogre. See *Avadānakalpalatā*, Kṣemendra, no. 34. See also Dayal 1932:183-84.

12. Dayal 1932:183. See also our excerpt from *The Jātaka*, above. It is interesting that the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (also quoted above) is one of the few in which it is the power of Sakra, rather than Śibi's own virtue, which restores the mutilated king. Because of its Hindu associations, it is not surprising that the *Kathāsaritsāgara* attributes such powers to the gods rather than to the king (Bodhisattva).



Pl. 14. The Bodhisattva and his disciple crossing a bridge, discovering and preaching to the tigress, the Bodhisattva devoured, and the disciple searching for his Master. At left, the Buddha relates this episode from a previous life.

The Vyāghrī Jātaka, Tibetan, 18th cen. (color on prepared cotton, det.). St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis.

The Vyāghrī (Mahāsattva) Jātaka
(Story of the Tigress)

Like the sacrifices of King Śibi, the Bodhisattva in the Vyāghrī Jātaka gives his own flesh that others might live. In each case the sacrifice is all the more admirable to the Buddhist adherent because it extends beyond man's concern with his own kind and loved ones to total pity for all creatures. The Bodhisattva's compassionate mercy moves him to cast his own body to a starving tigress and cubs, that they may have food.

In the following excerpts from Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, one can note a didactic character in the very deliberate evaluation by the Bodhisattva of the merits and consequences of such a sacrifice. The florid language in the eulogy by his disciple and the splendorous descriptions of the deed contrast greatly with the more archaic tone taken to describe the death of the Monkey King in the Mahākapi Jātaka (above), who also gave his life for others.

> . . . In the time that the Bodhisattva, who afterwards became our Lord, benefited the world by manifold outpourings of his compassion . . . he took his birth in a most eminent and mighty family of Brahmans, distinguished by the purity of their conduct owing to their attachment to their (religious) duties. . . .
>
> . . . a large store of wealth, distinction, and fame fell to his share. But the Bodhisattva took no delight in such things. His thoughts had been purified by his constant study of the Law, and he had become familiar with world-renunciation. . . .
>
> . . . So he shook off the householder's state, as if it were an illness, and retired to some plateau, which he adorned by his presence.
>
> There, both by his detachment from the world and by his wisdom-brightened tranquility, he confounded, as it were, the people in the world, who by attachment to bad occupations are disinclined for the calmness of the wise. . . .
>
> . . . it once happened that the Great-minded One (*mahātman*) was rambling along the shrubby caverns of the mountain. . . . Agita, his disciple at that time, accompanied him.
>
> Now, below in a cavern of the mountain, he beheld a young tigress that could scarcely move from the place, her strength being exhausted by the labour of whelping. Her sunken eyes and her

emaciated belly betokened her hunger, and she was regarding her own offspring as food, who thirsting for the milk of her udders, had come near her, trusting their mother and fearless; but she brawled at them, as if they were strange to her, with prolonged harsh roarings.

On seeing her, the Bodhisattva, though composed in mind, was shaken with compassion by the suffering of his fellow-creature, as the lord of the mountains (Meru) is by an earthquake. It is a wonder, how the compassionate, be their constancy ever so evident in the greatest sufferings of their own, are touched by the grief, however small, of another!

And his powerful pity made him utter, agitation made him repeat to his pupil, . . . "Behold the worthlessness of Saṃsāra![1] This animal seeks to feed on her own young ones. Hunger causes her to transgress love's law. . . . Go, then, quickly and look about for some means of appeasing her hunger, that she may not injure her young ones and herself. I too shall endeavor to avert her from that rash act." The disciple promised to do so, and went off in search for food. Yet the Bodhisattva had but used a pretext to turn him off. He considered thus:

"Why should I search after meat from the body of another, whilst the whole of my own body is available? Not only is the getting of meat in itself a matter of chance, but I should also lose the opportunity of doing my duty. . . . Therefore, I will kill my miserable body by casting it down into the precipice, and with my corpse I shall preserve the tigress from killing her young ones and the young ones from dying by the teeth of their mother.

"Even more, by so doing, I set an example to those who long for the good of the world; I encourage the feeble; I rejoice those who understand the meaning of charity; I stimulate the virtuous. . . . I clear the highway to Heaven in a manner pleasing to the charitable among men. . . . When may I have the opportunity of benefiting others with the offering of my own limbs?--I shall accomplish it now, and so erelong acquire Complete Wisdom.

". . . I do not care even for supreme and everlasting bliss for myself, but for securing the benefit of others. . . ."

After so making up his mind, delighted at the thought that he was to destroy even his life for securing the benefit of others, to the amazement even of the calm minds of the deities--he gave up his body.

The sound of the Bodhisattva's body falling down stirred the curiosity and the anger of the tigress. She desisted from her disposition of making a slaughter of her whelps, and cast her eyes all around. As soon as she perceived the lifeless body of the Bodhisattva, she rushed hastily upon it and commenced to devour it.

But his disciple, coming back without meat, as he had got none, not seeing his teacher, looked about for him. Then he beheld that young tigress feeding on the lifeless body of the Bodhisattva. And the admiration of the extraordinary greatness of his performance driving back his emotions of sorrow and pain, he gave fair utterance to his veneration for his teacher's attachment to virtues by this monologue:

"Oh, how merciful the Great-minded One was to people afflicted by distress! How indifferent He was to His own welfare! . . . In every way, veneration be to that illustrious Great Being (*mahāsattva*), of exuberant compassion, of boundless goodness, the refuge of all creatures, yea, that Bodhisattva for the sake of the creatures." And he told the matter over to his fellow-disciples.

Then his disciples and also the Gandharvas, the *yakṣas*, the snakes, and the chiefs of the Devas, expressing by their countenance their admiration for his deed, covered the ground that held the treasure of his bones, with a profusion of wreaths, clothes, jewel ornaments, and sandal powder.[2]

The Vyāghrī Jātaka does not appear in *The Jātaka* or in any other Pāli account; it probably dates from the period of the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the first and second centuries A.D. There are several Sanskrit and Sanskrit-derived accounts of it.[3] As with the Śibi Jātaka, some accounts are really references, rather than full descriptions, because the tale was so popular that its details were common knowledge. One such account, a *Jātakastava* [Praise of the Buddha's former births] from a Khotanese text found at Tun-Huang, follows:

> [When] a tigress, weak by hunger and thirst, with blazing eyes, savagely growling, seizing them with her mouth, was about to eat her cubs, You did for them a great, noble favor.
>
> For the tigress you fell then from the mountain, lest she should eat her beloved young cubs. You suffered distress for the world, as giver of security. To you homage, O gracious one.[4]

In some accounts and depictions, the Bodhisattva is a young prince, rather than an ascetic. This version is told as an Avadāna in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, in which Gautama Buddha miraculously summons a jeweled stūpa from the earth. His disciple, Ānanda, opens it to reveal the gleaming white bones of the Bodhisattva. The Buddha relates how he, long ago, as Prince Mahāsattva [The great being], sacrificed himself for a tigress. Upon throwing himself to the tigress, she did nothing. Realizing that she was very weak, the Bodhisattva assisted her by cutting his own throat and falling at her feet.[5] Notice that, just as in the various Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka texts, the later account increases the willingness of the victim into a joyful eagerness. In the *Jātakamālā* (above), he is a willing victim and self-aware of the importance of his sacrifice, but the narrative does not go so far as to have him further mutilate himself for the ease of his consumer.

Fa Hsien tells us of the great popularity of the Vyāghrī Jātaka in India. He visited the Taxila region of northern India where the event was said to have taken place. Large and elaborate stūpas commemorated the site, and it was a popular pilgrimage center (Fa Hsien 1886:32). Few depictions of it survive in India, although there must once have been a great many. Those which do survive include examples from Mathurā, Tibet, and Borobuḍur.

A railing pillar from Bhūtēsar, now in the Mathurā Museum, depicts three consecutive scenes which all appear to be of the Vyāghrī Jātaka. At the top is an enthroned figure, probably the Bodhisattva proclaiming his coming birth and the "Sacrifice to the Tigress." In the middle section, a hermit sits on the grass facing another figure. This depicts the ascetic and his disciple before their walk which ended with the death of the hermit (the Bodhisattva) and with the assurance of continued life for the tigress and cubs. The bottom scene depicts the tigress seizing his body between her teeth; in the background are the hermit's hut and a tree to signify the forest setting (Vogel 1909:156, pl. LI[*b*]).

A Tibetan *tanka* (painting) in the St. Louis Art Museum depicts various scenes of great charity (*dāna*) including the "Sacrifice of Eyes" by King Śibi, presentation of food portions (by Śibi

or Viśvāntara), and the Tigress Jātaka.[6] At lower left the ascetic (Bodhisattva) walks in the forest with his disciple. Next we see him preaching to the tigress and cubs, apparently about the unnaturalness of her desire to eat her own cubs. This is followed by a scene with the tigress biting into the ascetic, and the search by his disciple for him (pl. 14).

The Vyāghrī Jātaka is also found at Borobuḍur, as part of the series illustrating Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*. The reliefs are damaged, but in the opinion of Krom (1927[1]:316-19), the actual scene of devouring the Bodhisattva's body would not be shown. This lack of literal bloody depiction characterizes many South and Southeast Asian examples. We shall see that this is not the case in East Asia.

The selection and number of Jātaka tales for depiction in Central and East Asia is far more limited than in South and Southeast Asia. There are several reasons for this fact, not the least of which is that the tales were Indian in origin, invented by a people particularly fond of stories, and many of them had cultural significances and interests which eluded the Central and East Asians and their traditions. Also, the type of Buddhism transferred to East Asia was primarily Mahāyānist, emphasizing the "Bodhisattva cult" of infinite mercy and total charity (*dāna pāramitā*). As we have seen in the preceding samples of Jātaka types, most do not incorporate these qualities, but are fables and fanciful tales, and lessons of various other kinds. Therefore, the Jātaka depictions which do survive in the East are probably quite representative of the original favorites. Chief among these are tales which exemplify the Mahāyānist cult of unlimited charity (*dāna*), the lyrical, sentimental tone of which had far more appeal in East Asia than the puzzling austerity of Indian Hīnayānism. Thus, favorites for depiction in Central and East Asia include the Śibi ("Ransom of a Dove"), Vyāghrī-Mahāsattva, and Viśvāntara (see below) Jātakas. All of these tales speak to the ancient Chinese virtue of placing the welfare of others above the welfare of oneself, especially the duty and piety required of a good man towards dependents and parents.

The Tigress Jātaka is represented seven times in cave paintings at Qyzil and twice in Cave 3 at Sorcuq.[7] The two Sorcuq depictions are nearly identical, with conventionalized and stylized elements. In each case, the tigress stands on the Bodhisattva's chest, biting into his flesh, while the two cubs are symmetrically placed at his legs and arms. Three "strands" delineated on his chest suggest flowing blood. The disciple stands at his feet, with hand on chin, in a posture to suggest his thoughtfulness about the deed.

Pl. 15. The three princes in the woods; Mahāsattva offers his body to the tigress, then cuts his throat (or decapitates himself?), leaps to the tigress, and is devoured by her and the cubs.

The Mahāsattva Jātaka, Tun-Huang, Cave 428, China, c. 530 (wall painting, det.).

Looser, broader brushwork characterizes the Qyzil scenes, and this, together with the greater violence and bloodiness, probably directly influenced the Tun-Huang scenes. Both the Cave 254 (Northern Wei period, c. 500 A.D.) and Cave 428 (late Northern Wei, c. 530 A.D.) scenes at Tun-Huang depict the version in which the Bodhisattva did not become an ascetic but is one of three princely brothers out walking when the youngest sees his opportunity to give himself so that others might live. In understanding why it is this version, describing the Bodhisattva as a prince rather than hermit, that is depicted, it should be remembered that asceticism was an ancient and very Indian practice, but one unappealing and puzzling to the Chinese.

The Cave 254 Tun-Huang scene is a crowded, circular composition, difficult to read. At upper center are the three brothers, the Bodhisattva in the center, distinguished by his robes and halo. At far right, the Bodhisattva kneels, his arm raised, as he states the merits and consequences of a sacrifice such as he is about to make, and vows to give his life. To the left of this, Mahāsattva is shown leaping to his death. In the center, the voracious tigress, her arched back emphasizing her lean belly and eagerness to fill it, tears out the Bodhisattva's abdomen. A mass of squirming, writhing forms represents the brood of rapacious cubs.

The Cave 428 Tun-Huang depiction is far more lucid. It is arranged in three horizontal panels, one atop the other, in the manner of a scroll painting or traditional Han "hunting bronzes" (pl. 15). Scenes are divided by landscape elements. The upper register shows the three brothers out for a ride and hunt. In the second register they discover the starving tigress in a ravine; on a pretext, Mahāsattva persuades them to ride off, while he stays behind. The next two sections depict him offering himself to the snarling tigress. When she does not respond, he flings his body hard against the rock and dives from the precipice. His mutilated body is then devoured by the tigress and her seven or eight cubs. The bottom register shows the brothers reporting the event to their father, erecting a stūpa to commemorate him, and the appearance to them of Prince Mahāsattva as a perfect Buddha. The scenes are not all in exact sequence, but the elements are all very clear. Unlike the Indian depictions and Sorcuq paintings, the ferocity of the tigress, her enormous brood, and the mutilation of the Bodhisattva's body are emphasized at Tun-Huang.

A painting on the Tamamushi Shrine at Hōryūji in Japan refines and abbreviates the Tigress story by excluding all but the most central elements.[8] At the top stands the Bodhisattva (who is possibly an ascetic, but, by his garb, more probably a prince, as in the Tun-Huang scenes) calmly and deliberately hanging his cloak on a branch before the leap to his death.

To comprehend the Buddhist significance of such tales as the Tigress Jātaka, it is important to understand that what is commonly regarded as suicide falls into the sphere of worldly morality and cannot be applied to the Bodhisattva. When an unenlightened person commits suicide, he is attempting to destroy a false notion of self as an independent entity that has never existed and in the process destroys what can be termed the "conventional" self. The Bodhisattva's act drastically differs in quality, for it reflects a purified mental attitude. Comprehending the inter-related nature of all life, his action is analogous to one part of the body sacrificing itself for the purpose of saving the whole (Matsunaga and Matsunaga 1976[2]:37).

NOTES

1. *Saṃsāra* is the cycle of worldly existence; it implies waste and folly.

2. *Jātakamālā*, Āryaśūra, pp. 2-7.

3. Brief accounts of the Vyāghrī-Mahāsattva Jātaka appear in the *Rāṣṭrapālapariprcchā*, p. 22; the *Jātakastava*, Jñānayaśas, p. 23; and the *Jātakastava*, Khotanese, p. 432. Chinese accounts appear in the *Lieou Tou Tsi King*, the *P'ou sa pen cheng man louen*, and *Hien yu King* (see Chavannes 1910-1934 [4]:15). The Tibetan canonical collection, the Dsangs blun (Djang-lun), "The Sage and the Fool," also contains the Tigress Jātaka (see *Kañjur*, Rockhill.

4. *Jātakastava*, Khotanese, p. 432. Reprinted by permission of the American Philosophical Society and Mark J. Dresden.

5. Dayal 1932:182-83. Dayal also states that the tale is to be found in Kṣemendra's *Avadānakalpalatā*.

6. Bryner 1957, pl. II (Tanka 2). Our plate 14 is a detail from this work.

7. Grünwedel 1912:199, figs. 446, 447. Bryner (1957, figs. 11-14) also reproduces Qyzil and Sorcuq paintings. For the Tun-Huang Cave 254 paintings, see Tun-huang wên-we yen-chiu-so 1959, pl. 14. See also Basil Gray (1959:41-42) on the Tigress Jātaka in Central Asian painting.

8. Lee 1967(?), pl. 177. The Tamamushi Shrine Tigress Jātaka scene is reporduced in Shoten 1969*a*(2), pl. 44.

f e c b d a

Pl. 16. Forest scenes (a), gift of the children and their cruel treatment by the Brahmin (b), Madrī gathering fruits and meeting the tigers (c), Viśvāntara and Madrī in their forest home (d), the gift of Madrī to the Brahmin (e), and the great reunion (f).

The Viśvāntara Jātaka, Stūpa 1 (Great Stūpa), Sāñcī, India, c. 1st cen. B.C. (sandstone, det.).

The Viśvāntara Jātaka
(The Story of Viśvāntara)

Certainly the most famous and popular of all Buddhist birth stories is the Viśvāntara Jātaka. Regarded as the most moving and edifying of all his demonstrations of *dāna* [giving] inspired by *karuṇā* [purity of heart; total compassion and love], it came to be regarded as the culmination of all the Bodhisattva's lives and deeds, and as such was considered his final life before the incarnation in which he became the Buddha. It tells the story of a prince so generous that he gave even his own beloved family as gifts. A great many texts tell the Viśvāntara story, and the dozens of visual representations of it left to us no doubt represent only a fraction of those once extant.[1] Excerpts from the Pāli *Cariyapiṭaka* verse rendition follow:

. . .

I Viśvāntara thought, "Should any one request from
me my heart, my eyes, my flesh, my blood, or my
body, I will give them to him."

When I had formed this firm resolution, the solid
earth, mount Meru and the trees of the forest
were shaken.

. . .

Once Brahmins from Kalinga came to me and requested
me to give them Pandara, my valuable state elephant.

. . .

I thought, 'My mind delights in almsgiving; with an
unshaken determination I will give what these
Brahmins ask, I will hide nothing."

. . .

Taking the elephant by the trunk, I poured water
from a golden chalice upon the hands of the
Brahmins, and gave them the elephant.

. . .

The inhabitants of [the kingdom of] Śibi being
displeased at my giving the elephant, assembled
together and banished me from their land, say-
ing, "Go to the Vanka mountain."

Being thus driven away by them, I still remained
firm and unshaken, and begged permission to be
allowed once more to give alms.

. . .

Arriving at the junction of the four great roads, I gave away the carriage in which we four persons [myself, my wife, and children] came . . .

. . .

We four persons [having completed our journey on foot] . . . arrived at the quiet and peaceful forest, [and] dwelt there by the mountain.

. . .

While I resided in the forest a beggar came to me and requested me to give him my two children, Jali and Kanhajina.

When I saw the beggar approach my heart rejoiced, and taking my two children I gave them to the Brahmin.

When I gave my own children to the Brahmin, Jujuka, then the earth, mount Meru, and the trees of the forest shook.

Again, the god Sakra descended and, assuming the form of a Brahmin, requested from me my chaste and virtuous wife, Madri Devi.

Taking Madri by the hand and filling the Brahmin's hand with water, with a cheerful mind I gave Madri to him.

When I gave Madri, the gods of the sky rejoiced, the earth also, mount Meru, and the trees of the forest shook.

When I gave my children, Jali and Kanhajina, and also my chaste wife Madri, I thought of nothing else but of becoming a Buddha.

Not that my two children or Madri Devi were disagreeable to me, but, desiring to become Buddha, I gave that which was dear to me.

Afterwards, when my father and mother came to the great forest sorrowfully and with tears enquiring after my will, with modesty and reverence I approached them: then also the earth, mount Meru, and the trees of the forest shook.

Then departing with my relations from the great forest, I entered the delightful city of Jetuttara, that chief of cities.

> Then the seven kinds of jewels were rained from heaven and the clouds poured down water; the earth also, Mahā Meru, and the trees of the forest shook.
>
> The insensible earth, unconscious of joy or sorrow, was thus seven times shaken by the power of my almsgiving.[2]

Note that, just as in the Śibi Jātaka, all of these encounters are really tests by Sakra (Indra) of Viśvāntara's charity (*dāna*), compassion, and purity of heart (*karuṇā*). Though not specifically described in the *Cariyapiṭaka* verses above, we know from other accounts that Viśvāntara's family is restored to him, for the same reasons that Śibi's body is restored.

We are told from ancient accounts that depictions of the story caused great wailing and shedding of tears by the empathetic observer; even today, in Tibet and the Theravāda (Hīnayānist) countries of Southeast Asia, the Viśvāntara Jātaka is often recited and performed with the same effect (Winternitz 1933[2]:152). In some texts, as in Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, the poet lingers with special emphasis on the cruelty to the little ones as they are given away, and on the anguish of their parents:

> One day, when the princess had gone to seek roots and fruits, and the prince watching the children kept himself within the borders of the hermitage, there arrived a Brahman. . . . When the Bodhisattva saw a mendicant coming up to him after [so] long a time, his heart rejoiced, and his countenance began to beam. He went to meet him, and welcomed him with kind words. . . . Then he asked him the object of his coming. And the Brahman [said]:
>
> "Thy brilliant renown of heroic almsgiving has penetrated everywhere. For this reason I have undertaken this labor of begging from thee. Give me both thy children to be my attendants."
>
> Being so addressed, the Bodhisattva, that Great Being, as he was in the habit of cheerfully giving to mendicants and had never learnt to say no, bravely said that he would give both his darlings.
>
> . . . Now the children, having heard their father saying he would give them away, became afflicted, and their eyes filled with tears. His affection for them agitated him, and made his heart sink. So the Bodhisattva spoke:

"They are thine, being given by me to thee. But their mother is not at home. . . . Let their mother see them, neatly dressed as they are now and bearing wreaths, and kiss them farewell. . . ."

. . . Now the Brahman reflected: "The mother will return erelong [and may protest] or it is likely that his paternal love will make him repent." Thus considering, he tied their hands like a bundle of lotuses with a creeper, and as they were reluctant and looked back at their father, he began to drag those young and delicate children along with him, threatening them. . . .

[They cried:] "How will mother behave, when coming back with the many roots and fruits she has gathered in the forest for us, she will find the hermitage empty?

"Here, father, are our toy horses, elephants and chariots. Half of them you must give to mother that she may assuage her grief therewith. . . ."

After so speaking they parted. But the Bodhisattva, though his mind was shaken by these most piteous laments of his children, did not move from the place where he was sitting . . . his heart was burnt by the fire of irremediable grief, and his mind became troubled, as though it were paralysed by torpor occasioned by poison. . . .

In the meanwhile Madrī was disquieted by ill omens and prognostics, the foretokens of some accident. Desiring therefore to get back with her roots and fruits as soon as possible, she was obstructed on the way by ferocious animals. . . .

Having [at last reached home] she went to her husband. After performing the usual salutation, she asked him for the children. Now the Bodhisattva, knowing the tenderness of a mother's love and also considering that bad news is hard to be told, was not able to make any answer. . . .

[At length he answered her desperate pleas, saying] "I have not told the sad news straightway to you, Madrī, for firmness is not to be expected of a mind rendered weak by affection.

"See, a Brahman suffering from old age and poverty has come to me. To him I have given both children. Be appeased and do not mourn. . . .

"When asked for my life, should I be able to withhold it? Take this in account, my love, and approve the gift I have made of the children."

Madrī, whom the suspicion of the death of her children had put to anguish, now hearing by these words that they were alive, began to recover from her fright and affliction. She wiped away her tears . . . then looking up, she beheld something that made her speak with amazement to her husband: "A wonder! . . .

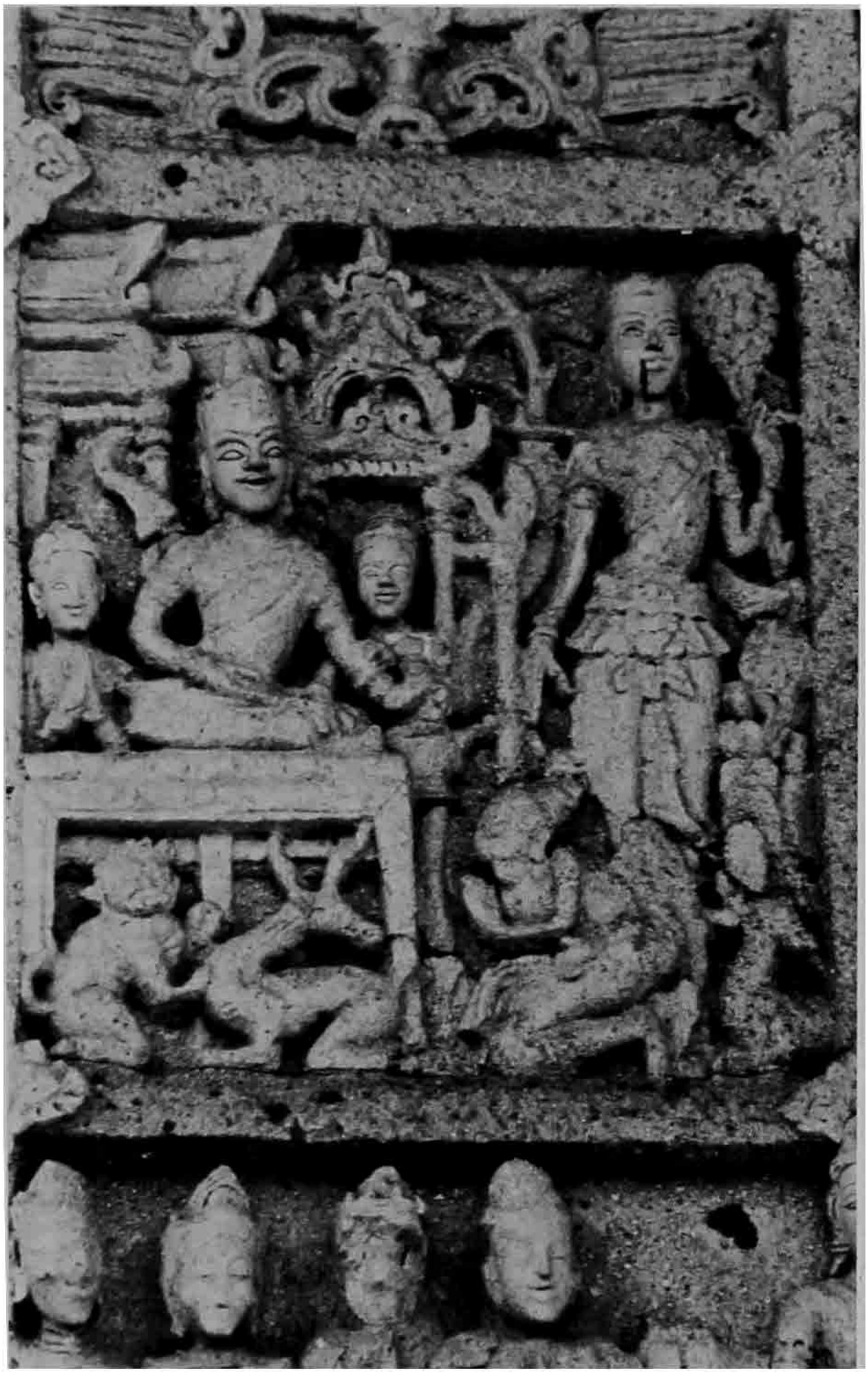
"Surely, even the Celestials are wrapt in admiration at your heart being to this point inaccessible of selfish feelings. . . .

"Earth shakes, trembling, I suppose, from exultation, as is indicated by the heaving of her breasts, the huge mountains. Golden flowers, falling down from heaven, make the sky appear as if it were illuminated by lightnings."[3]

At Bhārhut the Viśvāntara Jātaka, rather than being confined to a single frame as are the majority of narratives, is depicted in a series of reliefs at the entry to the shrine (Kala 1951, pl. 2). They show the prince ritually pouring water over the Brahmin's hands as he presents the elephant, riding away from the city, and presenting the chariot and horses. The Sāñcī depiction, like most reliefs at that site, is more visually complex than the Bhārhut version (pl. 16). It shows life in the forest home, the gift of the children and their cruel treatment, Madrī gathering food and meeting the tigers, Viśvāntara and Madrī, the gift of Madrī, and the reunion with Viśvāntara's family.

Various sculptures from Amarāvatī, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, and Gōli in southern India depict the Viśvāntara Jātaka; some include many episodes, while others lay stress only on the cruelty to the children and anguish of their parents (Ramachandran 1953, pl. XXXIII [*d*]; and Sivaramamurti 1956, pl. XXXIII). Approximately contemporary with the third-century Amarāvatī example, and very similar to it in style, is a Gandhāran piece, showing the pouring of water at the gift of the chariot (Marshall 1960, pl. 93, fig. 130). The Viśvāntara Jātaka appears also at Ajantā, in both Cave 16 and as an extensive cycle in Cave 17 (Begley 1968:55).

At Tun-Huang, in Cave 428 (c. 520-530 A.D.), a narrative painting in three horizontal bands portrays the sacrifices of Viśvāntara (de Silva 1967:96). Its composition mirrors that of the Tigress Jātaka, which it faces (see pl. 15). It includes the major episodes of the story, plus numerous scenes of conferences with elders and townspeople about Viśvāntara's proclivity for continual almsgiving.



Pl. 17. Presentation of the children, and Madrī in the forest.

The Viśvāntara Jātaka, Wat Lai, Lopburī, Thailand, c. 16th-18th cen. (stucco).

Occasionally a representation from a Mahāyānist region will make specific reference to a Perfection (*Pāramitā*). In some Tibetan *tankas*, the Viśvāntara Jātaka is painted, in its entirety, as exemplifying the Perfection of giving (*dāna*) (Bryner 1957, pl. XV, Tanka B, and Tankas 5 and 6).

As noted above, of the six major and four minor Mahāyānist Perfections, *dāna* is by far the most important. There are a few tales associated with the other Perfections, but those concerning *dāna* motivated by *karuṇā* [total love and mercy] are much more numerous and dramatic (Dayal 1932:178-79).

The ten Perfections hold a rather different position in Theravāda countries. The final ten of the 547 Pāli Jātakas in *The Jātaka* are each assigned one Perfection, and it is these ten which are most commonly depicted.[4] The Perfection assigned to an individual tale may not always seem to be in strong accord with the main thrust of the Jātaka (for example, the Mahājanaka Jātaka is regarded as exemplifying courage rather than renunciation), but this is probably because ten different Perfections must be given to the ten different Jātakas. Thus, in a sense, the emotive quality is not so strong as in the Mahāyānist scheme, but the ten represent the ideal virtues for both laymen and monks. The epic quality and great length of the final ten tales, as they unfold in cycles of ten across Southeast Asian chapel walls, make fine vehicles for lessons to the laity.

One such cycle, at Wat Rachasitharam, Thonburī, Thailand, shows a variety of scenes from the Viśvāntara Jātaka, including ones which do not seem central to the moral of giving, but which expand the story into an exciting epic (Wray et al. 1972, pls. facing pp. 94 and 97). Thus, for example, at the opening, Sakra, in his celestial garden, asks Phusati to descend to earth to give birth to Viśvāntara. Such scenes as this increase the role of celestials, particularly Sakra, which serves both to dwell on paradisaical scenes and flying beings, and to suggest that Sakra oversaw the entire life of the prince, including his dramatic tests of charity. As is to be expected in Thai painting, the divine and royal figures are stereotyped in features and characterized by a conventionalized elegance of line and gesture. Style and coloration throughout is fanciful and decorative: Viśvāntara and Madrī continually smile, even in painful and perilous situations.

The ten Perfections of the final ten Jātakas appear together in a stucco slab at Wat Lai, Lopburī, Thailand.[5] While painted cycles of Jātaka tales and episodes from the Buddha's life are common in Thai painting, such a stucco panel as this is rare. The Viśvāntara section shows the prince pouring water over the

Brahmin as he presents the two children (pl. 17). Madrī, at right, holding her food baskets, is shown in forest dress. The grotesque animal at lower left represents the mythical lion sent by celestials to delay her return. As in the Wat Rachasitharam painting described above, all the figures smile.

The Viśvāntara Jātaka was and is very popular in other Theravāda countries as well. We are told in a chronicle of Ceylon, the *Mahāvaṃsa*, that the Ruvanveḷi stūpa complex once had portrayals of many Jātakas and Life of the Buddha scenes; the Viśvāntara is described as being depicted in detail (Coomaraswamy 1908:5). It is still a favorite in that country: the nineteenth-century Pahala Vihāra painting shows a Brahmin asking Viśvāntara for his carriage and horse, while the same Jātaka is sung by women today as a popular song to accompany their weaving and sewing (Dhanapala 1964, pl. 27; Coomaraswamy 1908:235).

NOTES

1. The Viśvāntara is the final, and one of the longest, of the 547 tales in *The Jātaka* (Cowell, vol. 6, pp. 245-305, trans. Cowell and Rouse). It appears also in the Tibetan *Kañjur* (von Schiefner and Ralston, pp. 257-72). It is no. 29 in the *Avadānakalpalatā* of Kṣmendra. It appears in both the Jñānayaśas *Jātakastava* (p. 24) and the Khotanese (Tun-Huang) *Jātakastava* (p. 444). It is also included in Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* (pp. 83-92, no. 9) and the *Cariyapiṭaka* (pp. 11-15).

2. *Cariyapiṭaka*, pp. 11-15.

3. *Jātakamālā*, Āryaśūra, pp. 83-92.

4. An exception to this is the *Cariyapiṭaka*, which includes more than the final ten Pāli Jātakas to illustrate the Perfections.

5. Wray et al. 1972, fig. 5. Our plate 17 is a detail of the panel.

PART TWO

THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Descend, descend, thou pure being, Lord of Mankind. This day is the proper time. O lion of disputants, feeling mercy and compassion for all created beings, now descend to bestow the gift of religion.[1]

Pl. 18. The Bodhisattva in Tuṣita Heaven. Ajantā, Cave 2, India, late 5th cen. (wall painting, det.).

DESCENT FROM TUṢITA HEAVEN

Through innumerable good acts in all of his lives, the Bodhisattva had attained sufficient merit to achieve Enlightenment and Buddhahood in the life which followed his Viśvāntara existence. After his life as Viśvāntara came to an end, the Bodhisattva dwelt in Tuṣita Heaven.[2] The life of the Buddha begins with his descent from Tuṣita Heaven into the womb of his mother, Māyā. In Tuṣita he contemplates where and to what parents he should be born and surveys the earth till he sees the parents of his choice:

As he contemplates the world, in Śuddhodana's court he beholds Māyā, a woman like the consort of an immortal, radiant as the lightning's flash.

Observing in her his mother, he said to the immortals, "I am passing hence. For the last time I take up my abode in a woman's womb for the sake of devas and men."[3]

The deva host, arrayed in fine jewels, raised their joined hands and spoke to him, saying, "O Man Supreme, whose beauty is sublime, may thy vow prosper. We, too, for the world's sake, and to do thee honor, O Blameless One, will renounce the sweet enjoyment of sensual pleasures, and go and dwell in the world of men."

Exultantly they poured down from the sky a shower of the bright flowers of the coral-tree and praised him in sweet words: "How marvelous it is," said they, "that thou dost not desire the abodes of the immortals, where sweet peace reigns and where is no tribulation nor pain, and dost not crave for the pleasures of sense."

. . .

Thus, at the time and on the occasion of the departure of him whose eyes were bright like the hundred-petalled lotus, did the glad hosts of devas shout through the ten quarters of the world.[4]

It is interesting to compare accounts in the various texts of the sojourn in and descent from Tuṣita Heaven. The *Lalitavistara* and *Mahāvastu*, excerpts of which are quoted above, and plate 18, delight in resplendent imagery to describe the heavenly abode and the devas' delight at the coming birth. This serves to open the account of his life with a dramatic and captivating tone; the glory of the Buddha and his coming birth to serve mankind require a fitting poetic prelude. We are reminded of Āryaśūra's

Jātakamālā, which also is characterized by florid, ornate description; both Āryaśūra's and the *Lalitavistara* and *Mahāvastu* texts reflect the Mahāyānist tendency to transform the events they describe into miraculous, magically vivid happenings.

On the other hand, the *Nidānakathā* (pp. 58-62), the preface to *The Jātaka* and the earliest comprehensive Pāli account of the Buddha's life, has quite a different emphasis, in keeping with the spirit of Hīnayānist Buddhism. Here, the Tuṣita episode is mostly concerned with considerations by the Bodhisattva of the proper time, place, tribe, and parentage for the coming birth. Its language is far simpler than that of the *Lalitavistara* or *Mahāvastu* texts and lacks the sumptuous imagery to describe the golden realm of Tuṣita. The *Mahāvastu* (vol. 2, pp. 1-2) contains some passages on the proper place and parentage, but it totally lacks the *Nidānakathā*'s philosophical quality in pondering the proper time. The following excerpt is from the *Nidānakathā*:

> Of these [considerations] he first reflected on the Time, thinking, "Is this the time or not?" And on this point he thought, 'When the duration of human existence is more than a hundred thousand years, the time has not arrived.[5] Why not? Because in such a period men perceive not that living beings are subject to birth, decay, and death . . . and when the Buddhas speak of the impermanence of all things, of the universality of sorrow, and the delusion of individuality, people will neither listen nor believe.[6] . . . That therefore is not the time. Neither is it the right time when the term of human existence is under one hundred years. Why not? Because then sin is rife among men; and admonition addressed to the sinners finds no place for edification, but like a streak drawn on the water vanishes quickly away. That therefore is not the time. When, however, the term of human existence is under a hundred thousand and over a hundred years, that is the proper time." Now at that time the age of man was one hundred years. The Great Being therefore saw that the time of his advent had arrived.[7]

The descent from Tuṣita has been a relatively popular theme for depiction on Buddhist monuments. Among the extant examples are pieces from Borobuḍur in Java (Krom 1926, pls. 1 and 12), and from Amarāvatī (Sivaramamurti 1956, pl. 30[1]), Nāgārjunakoṇḍa (Longhurst 1938, pl. 11[*d*], from stūpa 3), Gandhāra (Ingholt 1957, pl. 8), and Ajantā in South Asia (see pl. 18).

The Ajantā, Gandhāran (Sikri), and Borobuḍur depictions show the Buddha seated in meditation in the royal pose as he scans the earth. His centralized position and frontality visually emphasize his concentration. Deva hosts enframe him, worshiping and rejoicing. At Borobuḍur they actually lift the enthroned Bodhisattva and journey toward earth for his descent into Māyā's womb. At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa the Bodhisattva stands in the act of descending to earth. His expression and posture in both examples reveal his awareness of his coming conception and final life.

NOTES

1. *Lalitavistara*, Mitra, p. 84. The four guardians from the four regions of the world are said to have exclaimed this to the Bodhisattva.

2. There are many heavens in the Buddhist cosmology. The abode of the *tuṣitas* ("satisfied" or "blissful") is the residence of a future Buddha before his last existence. It is near the summit of Meru, the Cosmic Mountain (Vallée Poussin 1928*a*).

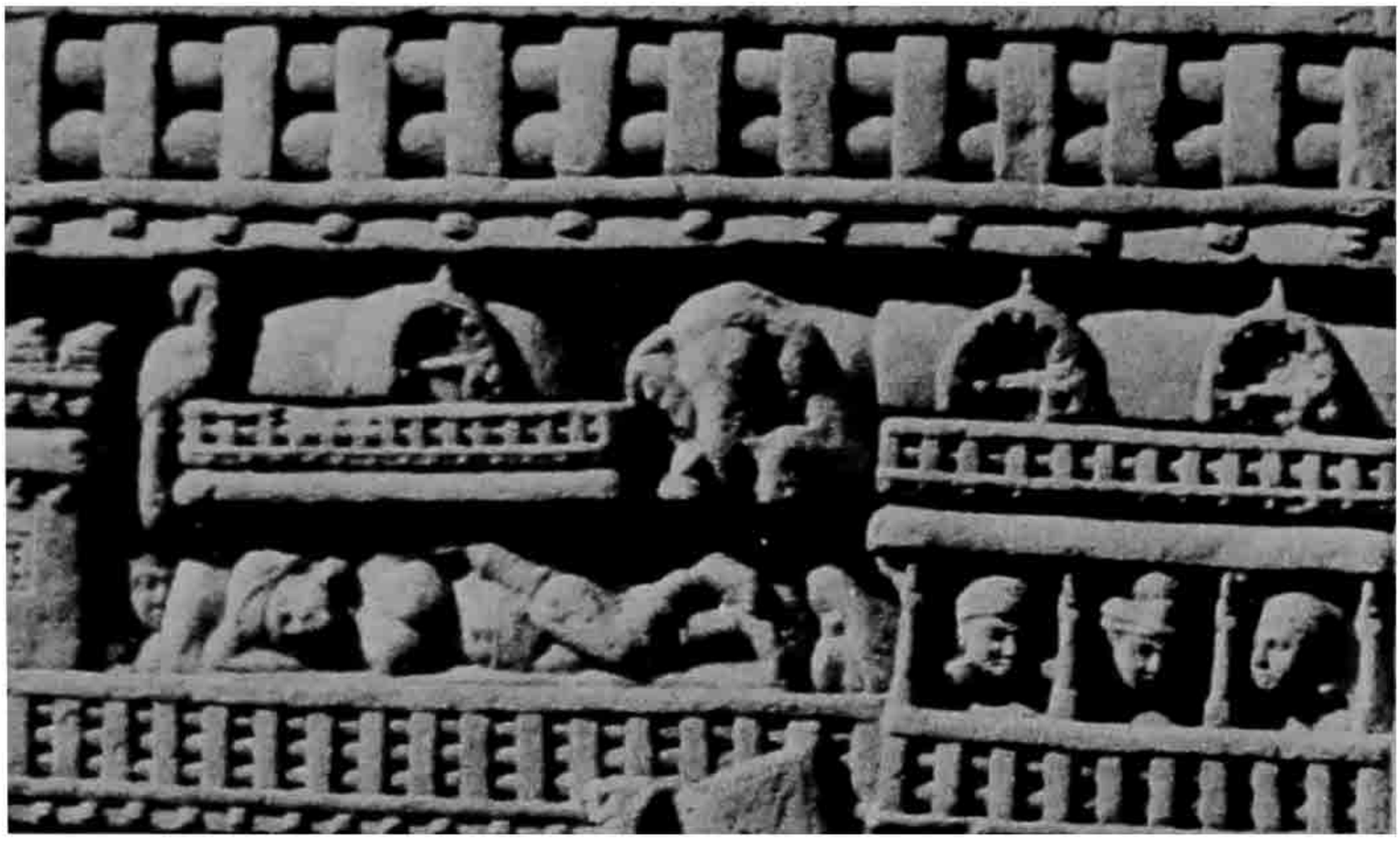
3. "Devas," or "shining ones," are celestial beings or demigods. The devas may inhabit any of the three realms and various heavens and hells (Humphreys 1956:139).

4. *Mahāvastu*, vol. 2, p. 4. Reprinted by permission of the Pali Text Society.

5. Basic to Indian thought is the conception that life grows shorter, men less good, and the world more polluted with each passing age (*kalpa*). Few men in the eras when life is very long ponder the transitoriness of existence (see "Jātakas of Renunciation," above).

6. Throughout most of Buddhism's history it was accepted that Gautama Buddha was not unique, that there had been and would again be other "Enlightened Ones." However, when a text refers to "the Bodhisattva," "the Buddha," "the Great Being," etc., it is usually (and always in this book) Gautama Buddha or Gautama as epitomizing the Buddha nature which is meant, unless the whole text specifically was written as a Mahāyānist text devoted to the Buddhas Amida, Vairocana, etc.

7. *Nidānakathā*, pp. 60-61.



Then falling from the host of beings in the Tuṣita Heaven, and illuminating the three worlds, the most excellent of Bodhisattvas suddenly entered at a thought into Māyā's womb.[1]

Assuming the form of a huge elephant white like Himālaya, armed with six tusks, with his face perfumed with flowing ichor, he entered the womb of the queen of King Śuddhodana, to destroy the evils of the world.[2]

Pl. 19. Dream of Māyā and Conception of the Buddha-to-be. Stūpa 1 (Great Stūpa), Sāñcī, India, c. 1st cen. B.C. (sandstone).

THE DREAM OF MĀYĀ, CONCEPTION OF THE BUDDHA-TO-BE, AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM

When the winter was over . . . the Bodhisattva descended from the beautiful Tuṣita abode, entered the womb of his mother, on the right side, in the shape of a white elephant with six tusks, his head conchenille colored, teeth streaked with gold, complete with all limbs and parts of limbs and faultless in every organ. On entering there he leaned against the right side and in no way to the left.[3] Queen Māyā sleeping gently on her couch, dreamed this dream: "Like snow and silver, with six tusks, beautiful legs, a fine trunk and a red head, a magnificent elephant has entered my womb, graceful of motion and with limbs strong as diamonds."[4]

* * *

Thus was he [the Buddha-to-be] conceived. . . . And the next day, having awoke from her sleep, [Māyā] related her dream to the rāja. The rāja had sixty-four eminent Brāhmans summoned . . . and he had vessels of gold and silver filled with delicate milk-rice compounded with ghee and sweet honey, and covered with gold and silver bowls. This food he gave them, and he satisfied them with gifts of new garments and of tawny cows. And when he had thus satisfied their every desire, he had the dream told to them, and then he asked them, "What will come of it?"

The Brāhmans said, "Be not anxious, O king! your queen has conceived: and the fruit of her womb will be a man-child; it will not be a woman-child. You will have a son. And he, if he adopts a householder's life, will become a king, a Universal Monarch; but if, leaving his home, he adopts the religious life, he will become a Buddha, who will remove from the world the veils of ignorance and sin."[5]

This account must surely seem puzzling to a modern reader, especially one in the Western world. Why does the Bodhisattva appear as an elephant, rather than in human form?

The elephant's majesty and benign nature are much respected in India. Sakra's (Indra's) much-prized elephant is six-tusked and often depicted as being white, which is an auspicious color.

Pl. 20. Dream of Māyā and Conception of the Buddha-to-be. Bhārhut, India, c. 2nd-early 1st cen. B.C. (red sandstone). Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Like elephants having six tusks and white bodies, the Bodhisattva is similarly rare and excellent. In the great epic, the *Mahābhārata*, the six-tusked elephant symbolizes the sun, whose course in the sky is run during a year with six seasons. The elephant was also a traditional Indian symbol of royalty, and a Universal Monarch is said to possess a rare and majestic elephant.[6] The dream, therefore, conveys to the Brahman soothsayers signs of both royalty and divinity.

In most textual accounts and visual depictions of the Buddha's life, the appearance of the elephant is real and literal. At Bhārhut and Sāñcī, a very corporeal elephant floats in space above Māyā, just before the conception (pls. 19, 20). In the *Buddhacarita* (Aśvaghoṣa, p. 4, trans. Cowell), the *Lalitavistara* account given above (Krom, pp. 112-13), and the *Mahāvastu* (vol. 2, p. 12), the Bodhisattva assumes the form of a white elephant upon leaving Tuṣita Heaven and entering Māyā's womb. What Māyā has seen in her dream is what has actually taken place. There are also, however, several symbolic and metaphoric references to the elephant in the *Mahāvastu* (vol. 2, p. 12). In the Pāli *Nidānakathā* (p. 63) the elephant is only seen in the dream: he does not actually enter Māyā's womb.

There is perhaps some reference to the dream and elephant as symbol only, rather than as literal truth, in certain visual examples. One such work is a Chinese painting on silk from Tun-Huang from the ninth or tenth century A.D. (de Silva-Vigier 1955, pl. 4). Within a mist unfurling toward a Chinese palace containing

the bed of Māyā sits a bubble encasing the infant Bodhisattva atop the white elephant. Two attendants accompany this important small being and his elephant.

A Himalayan wall painting done some seven centuries after the Tun-Huang piece shows similarities to it in the conventions of setting and in an emphasis on line (Singh 1971:82, pl. from the Hemis Monastery at Ladakh). Again, Māyā sleeps within a palace and the Buddha-to-be enters in a mist. The use of the mist in both works may indicate, as in certain texts, that the elephant is a symbol only and does not actually enter Māyā's womb. But, also, the delicacy of both line and artistic conception seems well suited to Chinese and Chinese-inspired sensibilities. The discreet treatment of a fully clothed Māyā and the misty appearance of the Being to be conceived is quite unlike the more naive and robustly direct Indian works (pls. 19, 20).

NOTES

1. The universe from the lowest hell to the limit of existence is divided into the world of desire (Tuṣita being one of its realms), the world of form (material world), and the formless world. See Thomas 1949:28, n. 2; see also Vallée Poussin 1928*a*:133-36.

2. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, p. 4, trans. Cowell. Parts of the *Mahāvastu* account (vol. 2, p. 8) are very similar to the *Buddhacarita*, though the account as a whole in the *Mahāvastu* is much more extensive than in the *Buddhacarita*.

3. All accounts stress that the Bodhisattva enters and is born from the right side. This may have some connection with the widespread belief in mythology that the left is less perfect than the right and can even imply evil (Latin *sinistra* 'left' is the derivation for English "sinister"). This was yet another symbol, besides the appearance of the splendid elephant, that the dream was full of good omens.

4. *Lalitavistara*, Krom, pp. 112-13. Reprinted by permission of Martinus Nijhoff, Institute KITLV, the Hague.

5. *Nidānakathā*, (pp. 63-64). This twofold prediction also appears in the *Mahāvastu* (vol. 2, pp. 11-12). In the *Lalitavistara* (Krom, pp. 120-21), however, the soothsayers declare only that it is the Buddha-to-be who is conceived. This is in character with the *Lalitavistara* being the "sport of a celestial being," which its title suggests, and thus removes the Bodhisattva from historical circumstances and a human nature. The *Buddhacarita* contains no prebirth prophecy at all.

6. Dayal 1932:296. See also the *Mahāvastu* (vol. 2, p. 12) in which the elephant is compared to the sun and moon; Māyā is told she will give birth to a being as select as the elephant is among animals.

Like the sun bursting from a cloud in the morning,
so he too, when he was born from his mother's womb,
made the world bright like gold, bursting forth
with his rays which dispelled the darkness.[1]

Pl. 21. Scenes of the Buddha's birth. Tibet, c. 17th-18th cen. (painting on cloth). Musée Guimet, Paris.

BIRTH OF THE BUDDHA AND HIS SEVEN STEPS

Now when queen Māyā by the power of the Bodhisattva's radiance knew that the time of his birth was near, she betook herself in the early vigil of the night to king Śuddhodana and spoke unto him these verses:

"It behooves me, o king, to retire to the pleasure garden [of Lumbinī]. It is the best of seasons, the spring, when women adorn themselves. Mid the hum of the bees, the song of the kokila and peacock is heard; clear, glittering and radiant is spread the glory of the blossoms. Come, give command, let us set off without delay!"

When the king had heard these words of the queen, he spoke, pleased and light of heart to his retinue: "Make ready a troup of horses, elephants, carriages and attendants; decorate Lumbinī, the place of most perfect quality.

"Let queen Māyā alone be seated in the splendid carriage and no other man or woman ride in it. And let women in various garments draw that carriage."

Now when queen Māyā had entered the Lumbinī park, and had descended from that splendid carriage, surrounded by human and divine women, she moved from one tree to the other, from one thicket into another, looking at one tree after the other, and came gradually to the place where the great *plakṣa*, jewel of all trees, grew. Thereupon the *plakṣa*-tree, moved by the power of the Bodhisattva's glory, bowed down and saluted her. Queen Māyā stretched out her right arm like a flash of lightning in the air, laid hold of a branch of the *plakṣa* and stood there without any effort gazing up to heaven with her mouth slightly open . . . now [the Bodhisattva] appeared, at the end of ten full months, out of his mother's right side, in possession of memory and knowledge, unsullied by the impurity of the mother's womb. At the same moment came Sakra, the king of the gods, and Brahmā, and stood before him. With the greatest respect they received the Bodhisattva in a divine garment. . . . Immediately at his birth the Bodhisattva descended to the ground. As soon as the Bodhisattva, the Great Being, touched it a great lotus appeared splitting open the great

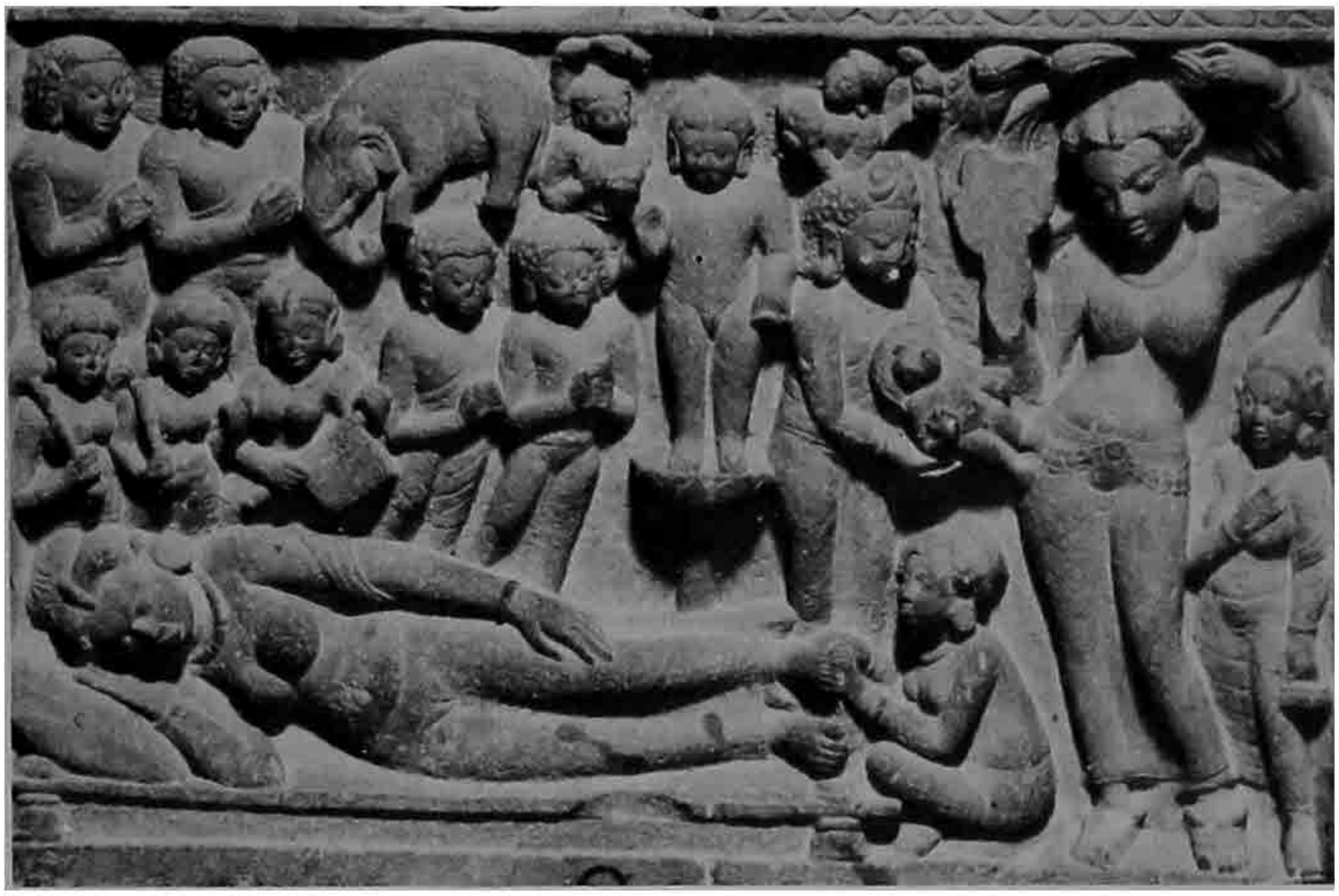
> earth. Nanda and Upananda, the *nāga* kings, showing the upper part of themselves in the air, caused two streams of water to appear both hot and cold and bathed the Bodhisattva. . . . He [then] placed himself on the lotus and looked towards the four winds.
>
> Without any man's help the Bodhisattva took seven steps to the east [west, north and south and said]: "Behold, I shall be the first of all dharmas who are the roots of Salvation."[2]

The tradition for the birth at Lumbinī grove is very ancient, probably as old as the third century B.C., and perhaps even earlier (Rhys Davids, T. W., in Hastings[8]:196-97). In some accounts, such as the *Nidānakathā* (pp. 65-66) and *Mahāvastu* (vol. 2, p. 16), a rationale is given for the forest birth: that Māyā, on the way to be delivered among her own people, was unexpectedly seized with the urge to give birth in the grove which lies halfway between the home of her husband and the home of her father. But, in the *Lalitavistara* account quoted above, as well as in the *Buddhacarita* (Aśvaghoṣa, p. 5, trans. Cowell), no such rationale is provided or needed.

There is an ancient Indian belief that the fertility goddess, or *yakṣī*, inhabits such a grove, where she renews the life of the forest by grasping a tree branch and tapping her foot at the tree's base, causing it to burst into bloom.[3] This *yakṣī* position of standing by a tree and grasping a high branch is also the pose used throughout Asia for the Buddha's birth. The *yakṣī* brings forth spring; Māyā as a great *yakṣī* brings forth the Bodhisattva. The setting for the birth in a verdant grove and this *yakṣī*-like pose complement one another well. Ready to give birth, Māyā is seized with the same craving and sense of belonging to the lush woods as are the *yakṣī*s with the coming of spring (see *Lalitavistara* excerpt above).

The birth of the Buddha, because it marked the entry of the Buddha into the world, was very frequently represented in Buddhist art. It came to be considered one of the four Great Miracles of the Buddha's life, the others being the Temptation-Enlightenment, the First Sermon and the Death (*Parinirvāṇa*).

The earliest visual depictions of the birth of the Buddha, and all other episodes in his life, are aniconic: they show the setting and characters of the episode, but the Buddha himself is "invisible."[4] The Buddha was considered too holy in the early centuries of Buddhism to be physically represented. It would have been unthinkable to "conjure forth" the departed Buddha to "live again" in visual form on these monuments. And, except for anthropomorphic depictions of minor deities and nature-cult



Pl. 22. Dream of Māyā and Conception, Birth of the Buddha, the Bath and Seven Steps. Sārnāth, India, c. 470-480 A.D. (chunar sandstone, det.). National Museum, New Delhi.

figures, there was no tradition in India of representing the divine in human form; no need was felt to do so until the first century A.D. At that time, the Kushan invaders added their own artistic traditions of iconic representation to Buddhism, though the need for a more immediate and intimate presence of the godhead by that date probably would have demanded iconic imagery even without the impetus of the Kushans. The earlier acceptance of anthropomorphic depictions of *yakṣīs*, *yakṣas*, and *nāgas* also made the step a natural one.

On many early depictions, particularly those from Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, the "invisible" Bodhisattva is received by the Guardians of the Four Directions, rather than by Sakra and Brahmā.[5] These follow the accounts of the *Nidānakathā* (pp. 66-67) and the *Mahāvastu* (vol. 2, pp. 18-19). In the *Mahāvastu* (vol. 2, p. 22), Sakra and Brahmā are mentioned as escorts.

In Kushan Gandhāran representations from northern India, Sakra and Brahmā receive the Bodhisattva (see Ingholt 1957, pls. 13-15). This may well be in accordance with the *Buddhacarita* (p. 5, trans.

Pl. 23. Birth of the Buddha. Wat Mahāthāt, Sukhōthai, Thailand, mid-14th cen., with restorations (stucco).

Cowell), thought to have been written by Aśvaghoṣa, an advisor to the Kushan king Kaniṣka, in the early second century A.D.

A fifth-century sculpture from Sārnāth of the four Great Miracles shows Sakra receiving the Bodhisattva, though the four male figures at left may indicate that the sculptor followed a text in which the Guardians of the Four Directions also attended the conception and birth (pl. 22). The same sculpture depicts two benevolent hooded *nāga*s pouring water over the Bodhisattva as he begins his Seven Steps.6

One of the many depictions of the birth from Southeast Asia is a small relief from Sukhōthai, Thailand (pl. 23). The receivers in this case seem to be Sakra and Brahmā, or perhaps only Sakra with an attendant. Another much more famous and extensive Southeast Asian depiction is the series of reliefs from Borobudur (Krom 1926, pls. 27-28). The style of carving and detailing is particularly ornate on these panels, expressing the miraculous nature of the Buddha's birth.

The painting from Tibet which opens our Birth of the Buddha section effectively conveys the celestial rejoicing at the birth (pl. 21). Evocations of song and clouds of incense fill the painting. Forms are full and billowing; line and pattern undulate

Pl. 24. Birth of the Buddha. Tun-Huang, China, T'ang Dynasty (618-909 A.D.) (fragment from a large Mandala). National Museum, New Delhi.

"I am born for supreme knowledge, for the welfare of the world,--thus this is my last birth,"--thus did he of lion gait, gazing at the four quarters, utter a voice full of auspicious meaning.[7]

Pl. 25. The Bath and Seven Steps. Wat Chaithit, Thonburī, Thailand, c. 19th cen. (wall painting).

and intertwine to produce a swirling, rhapsodic effect. This is quite in harmony with literary accounts such as the *Buddhacarita* and *Mahāvastu*, which delight in gorgeous description and miraculous happenings. By the use of language, both literary and visual, a sense of magnificence is evoked which is parallel to the magnificence of the event itself.

It is interesting that the Tibetan painting shows neither Sakra and Brahmā nor the four Guardian Kings receiving the Bodhisattva. Celestial handmaidens only attend the birth. This is a characteristic feature also of East Asian examples of the nativity, probably following the *Kako Genzai Inga Kyō* text.[8] But, though the Tibetan work lacks any male presence, one senses it was not due to the circumspection of the painting's creator; Māyā's female grandeur in the moment of giving birth is assertively sensuous.

The frankly sensual, robust figures of South and Southeast Asia are quite unlike the discreetly modest and slight figures of the robed Māyā and maidens from East Asia (pl. 24; see also Warner 1923, pls. 117-119; and Siren 1930, vol. 3, pl. 47[*d*]). Because of cultural backgrounds different from that of South Asia, the birth scene tended to be somewhat awkward and perhaps embarrassing for them.[9] The Buddha-to-be emerges from the sleeve of a clothed Māyā in these works. Perhaps to explain the pose which in India was familiar from the *yakṣī* tradition, the *Kako Genzai Inga Kyō* relates that Māyā raised her right hand to pick a flower from a high branch; at that moment the Bodhisattva was born (Warner 1923:62). Note that even the tree is fragile and small-leafed in the Tun-Huang work--again, very unlike its Indian prototypes. Our viewpoint is also higher and more remote than in the generally frontal Indian works. It is as if to remind us that the scene is a private one, not to be directly observed or entered.

The Seven Steps of the Buddha-to-be frequently accompanies depictions of the birth (Ingholt 1957, pls. 13-15; Singh 1971, pls. pp. 27, 190; Siren 1930, vol. 3, pl. 47[*d*]). This purely miraculous episode, wherein the newborn Bodhisattva stands alone surveying the earth and the deeds done in his many previous existences, is to be found even on early depictions (see pl. 26; the empty lotus stand symbolizes the presence of the Bodhisattva). In full consciousness, he realizes this will be for him the end of the cycle of rebirths: that he will obtain Enlightenment and render aid to men in their search for Enlightenment and salvation. The Seven Steps thus affirms the importance of the birth and predicts the great events to come.

In addition to the many Indian depictions, the Seven Steps was popular in Southeast and East Asia. A modern wall painting from Thonburī, Thailand, shows the Birth, Bath, and Seven Steps (pl. 25). Note that Sakra and Brahmā attend the birth. The Bath and Steps can also be seen in the Guimet Tibetan work; at lower left

celestials bathe the Bodhisattva, as he steps on lotuses in the four directions, proclaiming his final birth (pl. 21).

Each action of the newborn Bodhisattva in his Seven Steps came to assume, for certain schools of Buddhism, an esoteric and symbolic meaning. Standing on the earth facing the four directions signified the obtaining of the four *Riddhipadas* (psychic powers): the seven strides were seven steps in a bodhisattva's development; the uplifted canopy signified the umbrella of emancipation; and looking around in all directions symbolized unveiled knowledge (*Mahāpadana Suttanta*, p. 12).

The Seven Steps was a particular favorite in East Asia, usually in sculptural form with the Bodhisattva alone; Māyā and the celestials are absent. The Bodhisattva raises his right arm and points to the heavens, while he points his left arm to the earth, as he declares this to be his final birth. The earliest-known Chinese depictions of the Seven Steps date from the fifth century A.D.: one from a Yün-Kang cave and the other a bronze stele dated 482 A.D. (Lefebvre d'Argencé 1974:344). It was also very popular in later periods, both in China and Korea. A Korean piece of the ninth century shares many of the same qualities of aristocratic elegance which so mark the Japanese images (Kim and Lee 1974, pl. 116). Most Japanese sculptures of the Seven Steps (*Tanjo Shaka* in Japanese terminology), date from between the eighth and thirteenth centuries, when devotion to the historical Buddha, Gautama, or Sakyamuni, was at its height (Lee 1967?, pl. 405; see also Matsunaga and Matsunaga 1976[2]:268-69).

NOTES

1. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, p. 5, trans. Cowell.

2. *Lalitavistara*, Krom, pp. 126-29. Reprinted by permission of Martinus Nijhoff, Institute KITLV, The Hague. "Dharma" refers to the Law of Buddhism (or Law of Righteousness), or the upholder of the Law.

3. Some of the earliest Buddhist monuments show these *yakṣīs* lending their auspicious presence to the sanctuary. See Lee 1967?, pls. 89 and 92.

4. Alfred Foucher's study (1934) of what he believes to be the very earliest birth depictions show a female on a lotus between two elephants. There are interesting points in his book, but the thesis is generally inconclusive and unconvincing.

   By about the second century B.C., clearly recognizable aniconic depictions of the birth appear.

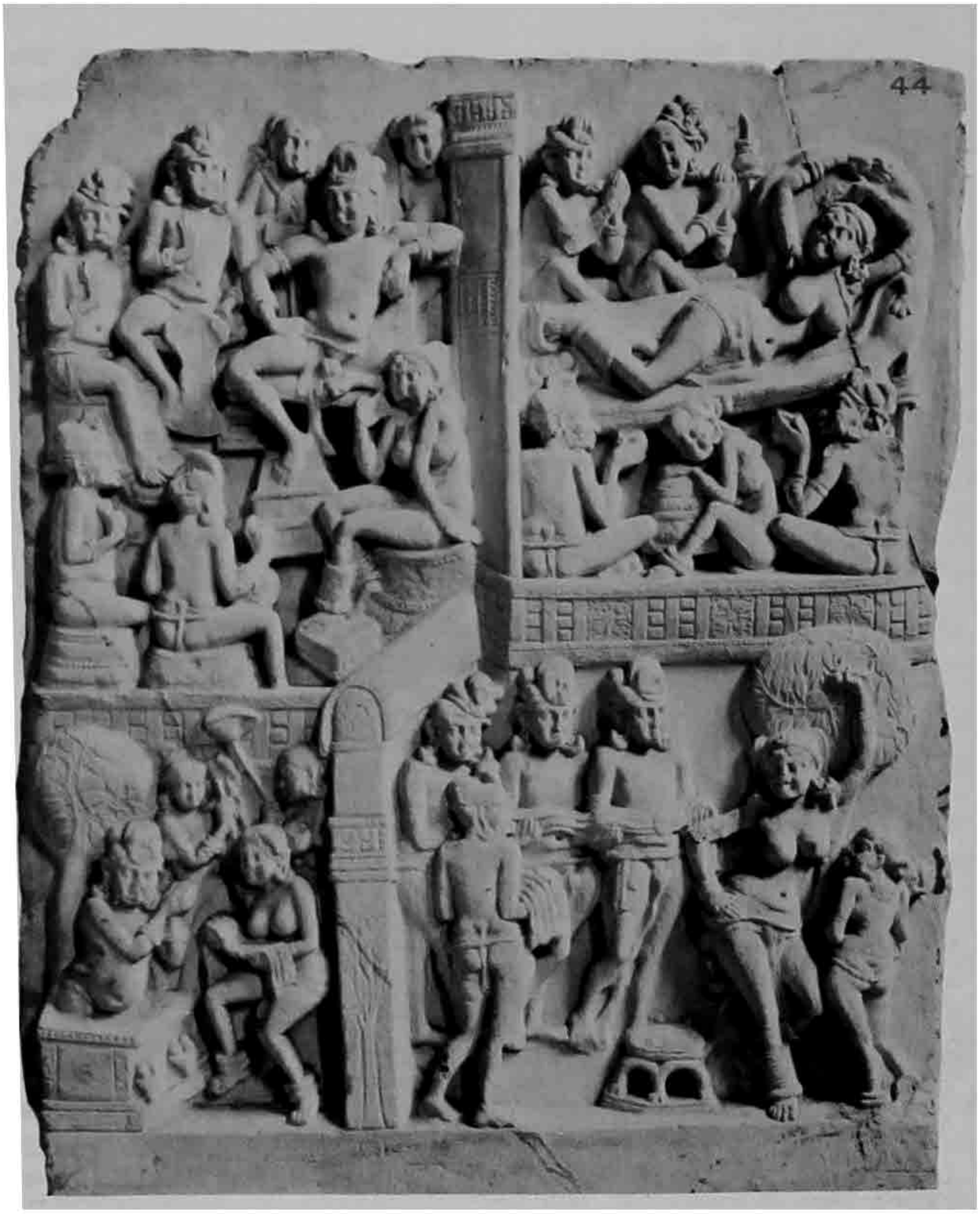
5. See plate 26 of four birth-connected episodes in the following episode.

6. The *nāga*s frequently appear in visual depictions of the Birth, Bath, and Seven Steps. They are rare on Gandhāran sculptures, but common at Mathurā and Sārnāth (see Vogel 1909:152). They became blended with Chinese dragons on a fifth-century Chinese stele of the Birth and Seven Steps (see Siren 1930, vol. 3, pl. 47[*d*].

7. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, pp. 6-7, trans. Cowell.

8. Excerpt published in Warner (1923:62). Interestingly, the Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita (Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King)* omits any reference to Sakra or the Guardian Kings and implies only that handmaidens and devas received the Bodhisattva.

9. It is interesting to note as an example that in the Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita* (*Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King*, p. 7) there is a passage which describes Māyā after the birth: "The queen-mother, beholding her child, born thus contrary to laws of nature, her timorous woman's heart was doubtful; her mind, through fear, swayed between extremes. . . . Not distinguishing the happy from the sad portents, again and again she gave way to grief. . . ." There is no such passage in Cowell's version, nor does Māyā at any point feel that anything is abnormal about the birth or the child: her pride is total.



*This prince will reach the summit of perfect enlightenment, he will turn the wheel of the Dharma; he who sees what is exceedingly pure, this prince feels for the welfare of the multitude, and his religion will be widely spread.*1

Pl. 26. Dream and Conception; Interpretation; Birth, Reception by the Four Kings, Seven Steps; Presentation to the *yakṣa* sage Śakyavardhana. Amarāvatī, India, c. 2nd cen. A.D. (limestone). British Museum, London.

ASITA'S PROPHECY

Then having learned by signs and through the power of his penances this birth of him who was to destroy all birth, the great seer Asita in his thirst for the excellent Law (Dharma) came to the palace of the Śākya king [Śuddhodana].[2]

. . .

He entered into the precincts of the king's gynaeceum, which was all astir with the joy arisen from the birth of the young prince,--grave from his consciousness of power, his preeminence in asceticism, and the weight of old age.

Then the king, having duly honored the sage, . . . invited him to speak with all ceremonies of respect. . . .

"I am indeed fortunate, this my family is the object of high favor, that thou shouldst have come to visit me; be pleased to command what I should do, O benign one; I am thy disciple, be pleased to show thy confidence in me."

The sage, being thus invited by the king, filled with intense feeling as was due, uttered his deep and solemn words, having his large eyes opened wide with wonder:

"This is indeed worthy of thee, great-souled as thou art, fond of guests, liberal and a lover of duty,--that thy mind should be thus kind towards me, in full accordance with thy nature, family, wisdom, and age.

. . .

"But hear now the motive for my coming and rejoice thereat; a heavenly voice has been heard by me in the heavenly path, that thy son has been born for the sake of supreme knowledge."

. . .

Having heard this address of his, the king, with his steps bewildered with joy, took the prince, who lay on his nurse's side, and showed him to the holy ascetic.

Thus did the great seer behold the king's son with wonder,--his foot marked with a wheel, his

fingers and toes webbed, with a circle of hair between his eyebrows, and signs of vigor like an elephant.[3]

Having beheld him seated on his nurse's side . . . he stood with the tears hanging on the ends of his eyelashes, and sighing he looked up towards heaven.

But seeing Asita with his eyes thus filled with tears, the king was agitated through his love for his son, and with his hands clasped and his body bowed he thus asked him in a broken voice choked with weeping,

. . .

"Surely this young shoot of my family is not born barren, destined only to wither! Speak quickly, my lord, I cannot wait; thou well knowest the love of a near kindred for a son."

Knowing the king to be thus agitated through his fear of some impending evil, the sage thus addressed him: "Let not thy mind, O monarch, be disturbed,--all that I have said is certainly true.

"I have no feeling of fear as to his being subject to change, but I am distressed for mine own disappointment. It is my time to depart, and this child is now born,--he who knows that mystery hard to attain, the means of destroying birth.

"Having forsaken his kingdom, indifferent to all worldly objects, and having attained the highest truth by strenuous efforts, he will shine forth as a sun of knowledge to destroy the darkness of illusion in the world.

. . .

"Therefore since I have fallen short of that excellence, though I have accomplished all the stages of contemplation, my life is only a failure; since I have not heard his Law, I count even dwelling in the highest heaven a misfortune."

Having heard these words, the king with his queen and his friends abandoned sorrow and rejoiced; thinking, "such is this son of mine," he considered that his excellence was his own.

But he let his heart be influenced by the thought, "he will travel by the noble path,"--he was not in truth averse to religion, yet still he saw alarm at the prospect of losing his child.

> Then the sage Asita, having made known the real fate which awaited the prince to the king who was thus disturbed about his son, departed by the way of the wind as he had come, his figure watched reverentially in his flight.[4]

An Amarāvatī sculpture of four episodes connected with the Buddha's birth shows (at lower left) the presentation before the *yakṣa* Śākyavardhana (pl. 26). As in the pre-first-century A.D. depictions, the Buddha is "invisible," but we see his tiny footprints on the cloth. The relief depicts one of the several versions in Buddhist literature of the newly born Buddha-to-be presented before a great sage.[5] Although this particular piece shows another, Asita is the sage most frequently named in the texts as the one to recognize the prince's great destiny.[6]

Though it is extensively treated in certain texts, the Presentation and Prophesy is less frequently depicted in visual form than are many other Life scenes. An interesting relief from Pagān of the eleventh century, however, shows the infant Bodhisattva placing his feet on the head of the sage, indicating that it is not the Bodhisattva who should be blessed by the revered sage, but the sage who should bow to the holy prince.[7]

NOTES

1. The *Dhammapada*, Müller, p. 127 (*Nâlakasutta* [*Nālakasūtra*], v. 15). Turning the "Wheel of the Dharma" expresses the Buddhist conception of the Doctrine, or Law, as being like a cosmic disc, turned and thus radiated to the audience of worshipers. It is often met with in Buddhist imagery, particularly in the image of the Buddha preaching (see the episode "First Sermon at the Deer Park" below).

2. Twice in this account Asita refers to the Buddha-to-be as "he who will destroy all birth," meaning that the tyrannical cycle of birth, death, and rebirth will be ended in this final life of the Bodhisattva; it may also refer to the Bodhisattva as a savior of others trapped in this universal cycle.

3. These supernatural markings are among the thirty-two such markings of the Buddha's body (for the complete listing see *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King*, pp. 359-60; Cowell's manuscripts of the Sanskrit original do not list all the signs). Some of them, such as the hands and feet marked by the Wheel of the Law, a raised area on the top of his head (*uṣṇiṣa*), and a circle of hair or white light between his eyes (*ūrṇā*), frequently appear in visual depictions. The other signs

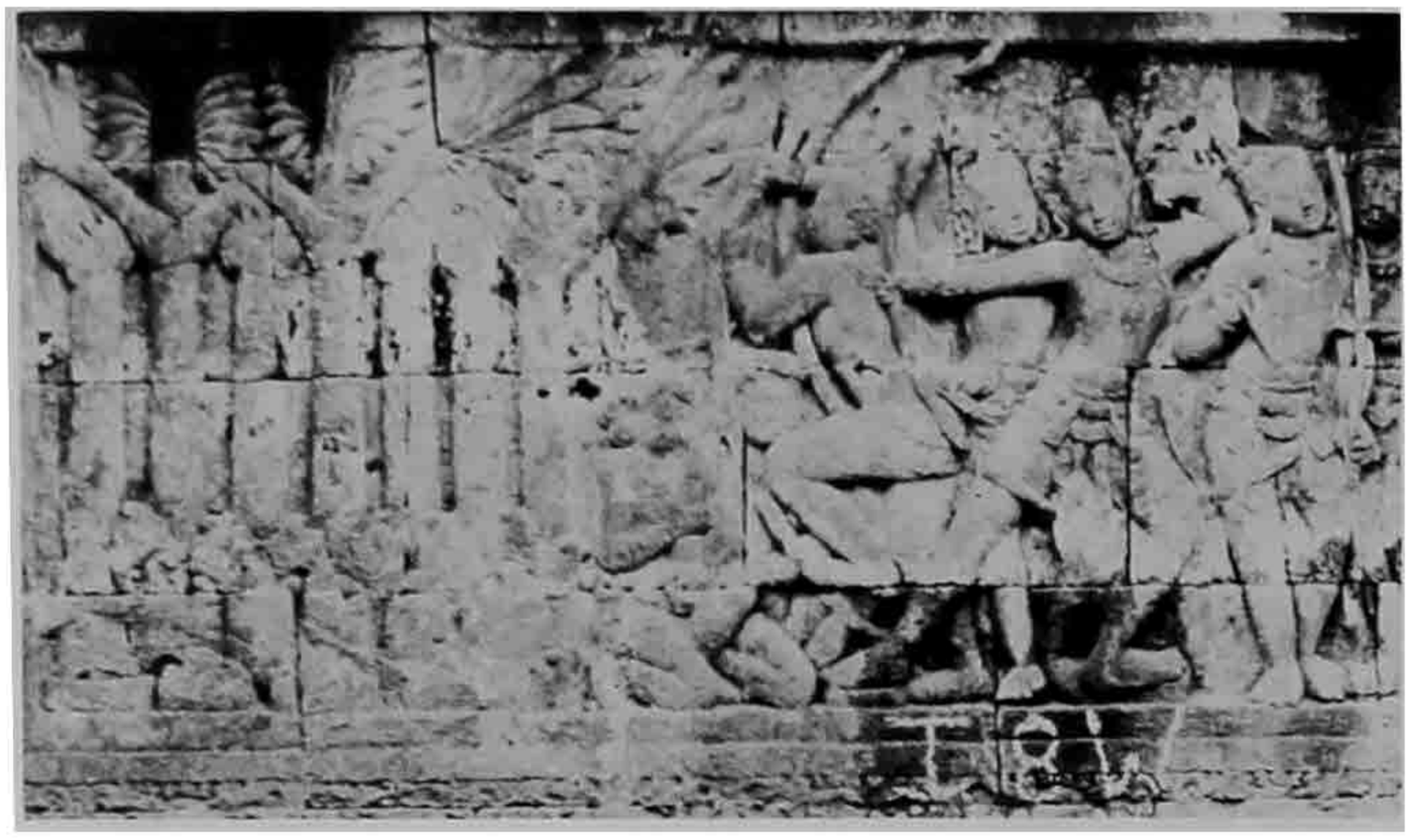
mainly show that his beauty is a composite of all excellent features: his breast and torso are broad and sleek as a lion's, his legs are long and strong as a stag's, etc. (these are often seen in the fifth-century sculptures from Mathurā and Sārnāth).

4. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, pp. 10-14, trans. Cowell. The reference to Asita being "watched reverentially in his flight" may be metaphorical here; in other texts, Asita has developed, by profound meditation, magical powers of flight (see the *Mahāvastu*, vol. 2, p. 32).

5. *Nidānakathā*, p. 69; and *Jinacarita*, Medhaṇkara, p. 41. Both of these texts name Kāladevala as the sage.

6. See the *Mahāvastu*, vol. 2, pp. 27-40; and *Sūtranipāta*, pp. 165-73. See also notes 1, 3, and 4 above for the Sanskrit and Chinese *Buddhacarita* and the *Nālakasūtra*.

7. See de Silva-Vigier 1955, pl. 22. Though the relief apparently depicts Asita before the Bodhisattva, the placement of the feet on his head follows the *Nidānakathā* and *Jinacarita* accounts of Kāladevala (see note 5 above).



The Bodhisattva, having stringed the bow, took an arrow, and, with great force and vigor, shot it. That arrow successively pierced the targets of Ānanda, Devadatta, Sundaranda and Daṇḍapāṇi, and, passing on to the iron drum . . . [and] seven palm trees [it] . . . disappeared within the earth . . . hundreds of thousands of men and gods burst forth in loud and repeated cheers.[1]

Pl. 27. The Archery Contest. Borobudur, Java, First Gallery, c. 800 A.D. (lava stone).

THE LIFE OF THE YOUNG PRINCE

But the Bodhisattva in due course grew to manhood. And the king [to keep his son from renouncing the world and leaving his kingdom] had three mansions made, suitable for the three seasons, one nine stories high, one seven stories high, and one five stories high, and he provided him with forty thousand dancing girls. So the Bodhisattva, surrounded by well-dressed dancing girls, like a god surrounded by troops of nymphs, and attended by musical instruments which played of themselves, lived, as the seasons changed, in each of these mansions in enjoyment of great majesty. And the mother of Rāhula was his principal queen.

Whilst he was thus in the enjoyment of great prosperity the following talk sprang up in the public assembly of his clansmen: "Siddhārtha lives devoted to pleasure; not one thing does he learn; if war should break out, what would he do?"

The king sent for the future Buddha, and said to him, "Your relations, Beloved One, say that you learn nothing, and are given up to pleasure: now what do you think you should do about this?"

> "O king! there is no art it is necessary for me to learn. Send the crier round the city, that I may show my skill. Seven days from now I will show my kindred what I can do."
>
> The king did so. The Bodhisattva assembled those so skilled in archery that they could split even a hair, and shoot as quick as lightning; and then, in the midst of the people, he showed his relatives his twelve-fold skill, and how unsurpassed he was by other masters of the bow. So the assembly of his clansmen doubted no longer.[2]

The period from the Bodhisattva's Birth and Seven Steps to the events which lead up to his Great Departure generally are given rather brief treatment in the texts; the events of this period are minor compared to the birth and events culminating in his Enlightenment and Preaching. One theme which does emerge, however, is that of the prince's great beauty, virility, and talents. These qualities are inherently present in him because, besides being a royal prince, he is the Buddha-to-be, whose good karma has been built up over innumerable previous lives and whose physical form reflects his moral stature.

Of the various competitions in writing, recitation, wrestling, and archery, the archery contest is the one given fullest treatment in the texts and visual depictions.[3] It is depicted at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, in an eighteenth-century cave painting from Ceylon, on a Chinese fifth-century relief from Yün-Kang Cave 6, and at Borobudur (pl. 27).[4] In Gandhāra, where the life of the Buddha was often depicted in great detail, writing and recitation, wrestling, and tug-of-war are represented almost as frequently as the archery contest (Ingholt 1957, pls. 27-39).

NOTES

1. *Lalitavistara*, Mitra, p. 213.

2. *Nidānakathā*, pp. 75-76.

3. The *Mahāvastu*, vol. 2, pp. 72-74. In the *Nidānakathā* (see note 2 above), only the archery contest is described.

4. See Longhurst 1938, pl. XXXII(*a*); Dhanapala 1964, pl. 25; and Ashton 1924, pl. XIV, fig. 2.

If you wish to remove the cause of birth, disease, death and pain, and to render asunder the bonds of worldliness, follow him whose conduct is as pure and as expansive as the sky.[1]

Pl. 28. The Four Encounters. Tun-Huang, 9th cen. A.D. (painting on silk). Musée Guimet, Paris.

THE FOUR ENCOUNTERS

[One day] hearing of the entrancing character of the city groves, belovèd of the womenfolk [the young prince] set his heart on an expedition outside, like an elephant confined inside a house.

Then the king learnt of the state of mind of that heart's desire, styled his son, and directed a pleasure excursion to be prepared worthy of his love and majesty and of his son's youth.

And, reflecting that the prince's tender mind might be perturbed thereby, he forbade the appearance of afflicted common folk on the royal road.

Then with the greatest gentleness they cleared away on all sides those whose limbs were maimed or senses defective, the aged, sick and the like, and the wretched, and made the royal highway supremely magnificent.

. . .

Then the prince mounted a golden chariot, to which were harnessed four well-broken horses with golden gear, and with a driver who was manly, skilful and reliable.

Then, like the moon with the constellations mounting to the sky, he proceeded with a suitable retinue towards the road which was bestrewn with heaps of brilliant flowers and made gay with hanging wreaths and fluttering banners.

. . .

Thus the first time that the prince saw the royal highway, it was thronged with respectful citizens, clad in cleanly sober guise; and he rejoiced and felt in some degree as if he were being recreated.

But when the . . . gods saw that city as joyful as Paradise itself, they created the illusion of an old man in order to incite the king's son to leave his home.

Then the prince saw him overcome with senility and different in form to other men. His interest was excited and, with gaze steadily directed on the man, he asked the charioteer:--

"Good charioteer, who is this man with white hair, supporting himself on the staff in his hand, with his eyes veiled by the brows, and limbs relaxed and bent? Is this some transformation in him, or his original state, or mere chance?"

When the chariot-driver was thus spoken to, those very same gods confounded his understanding, so that, without seeing his error, he told the prince the matter he should have withheld:--

"Old age it is called, that which has broken him down,--the murderer of beauty, the ruin of vigor, the birthplace of sorrow, the grave of pleasure, the destroyer of memory, the enemy of the senses.

"For he too sucked milk in his infancy, and later in course of time he crawled on the ground; in the natural order he became a handsome youth and in the same natural order he has now reached old age."

At these words the king's son started a little and addressed the charioteer thus, "Will this evil come upon me also?" Then the charioteer said to him:--

"Inevitably by force of time my long-lived lord will know this length of his days. Men are aware that old age thus destroys beauty and yet they seek it."

Then, since his mind was purified by his intentions in the past and his good merit had been accumulated through countless epochs, he was perturbed in his lofty soul at hearing of old age, like a bull on hearing the crash of a thunderbolt near by.

Fixing his eye on the old man, he sighed deeply and shook his head; and looking on the festive multitude he uttered these words in his perturbation:--

'Thus old age strikes down indiscriminately memory and beauty and valor, and yet with such a sight before its eyes the world is not perturbed.

"This being so, turn back the horses, charioteer; go quickly home again. For how can I take my pleasure in the garden, when the fear of old age rules in my mind?"

So at the bidding of his master's son the driver turned back the chariot. Then the prince returned to the same palace, but so lost in anxiety that it seemed to him empty.

But even there he found no relief, as he ever dwelt on the subject of old age; therefore once more with the permission of the king he went out, all ordered as before.

Thereupon the same gods created a man with body afflicted by disease, and the son of Śuddhodana saw him, and, keeping his gaze fixed on him, he said to the charioteer:--

"Who is this man with swollen belly and body that heaves with his panting? His shoulders and arms are fallen in, his limbs emaciated and pale. He calls out piteously, 'mother', as he leans on another for support."

Then the charioteer replied to him, "Good Sir, it is the mighty misfortune called disease, developed in full force from the disorder of the humors, that has made this man, once so competent, no longer master of himself."

Thereupon the king's son looked at the man compassionately and spoke, "Is this evil peculiar to him, or is the danger of disease common to all men?"

Then the chariot-driver said, "Prince, this evil is shared by all. For men feast and yet they are thus oppressed by disease and racked by pain."

Hearing this truth, he was perturbed in mind and trembled like the reflection of the moon on rippling water; and in his pity he uttered these words in a somewhat low tone:--

"This is the calamity of disease for mankind and yet the world sees it and feels no alarm. Vast, alas, is the ignorance of men, who sport under the very shadow of disease.

"Turn back the chariot, charioteer, from going outside; let it go straight to the palace of the chief of men. And on hearing of the danger of disease, my mind is repelled from pleasures and shrinks, as it were, into itself."

Then he turned back with all feeling of joy gone and entered the palace, given over to brooding; and seeing him thus returned a second time, the lord of the earth made enquiry.

But when he learnt the reason for his return, he felt himself already abandoned by him. And he merely reprimanded the officer in charge of clearing the road, and angry though he was, imposed no severe punishment on him.

And he further arranged for his son the application of sensual attractions in the highest degree, hoping, "Perhaps he will be held by the restlessness of the senses and not desert us."

But when in the women's apartments his son took no pleasure in the objects of sense, sounds and the rest, then he directed another excursion with the thought that it might cause a change of mood.

. . .

Then the royal highway was decorated and guarded with especial care; and the king changed the charioteer and chariot and sent the prince off outside.

Then as the king's son was going along, those same gods fashioned a lifeless man, so that only the charioteer and the prince, and none other, saw the corpse being borne along.

Thereon the king's son asked the charioteer, "Who is being carried along yonder by four men and followed by a dejected company? He is dressed out gorgeously and yet they bewail him."

Then the driver's mind was overcome by the . . . gods and, though it should not have been told, he explained this matter to the lord of mankind:--

"This is someone or other, lying bereft of intellect, senses, breath and qualities, unconscious and become like a mere log or bundle of grass. He was brought up and cherished most lovingly with every care and now he is being abandoned."

Hearing the driver's reply, he was slightly startled and said, "Is this law of being peculiar to this man, or is such the end of all creatures?"

Then the driver said to him, "This is the last act for all creatures. Destruction is inevitable for all in the world, be he of low or middle or high degree."

Then, steadfast-minded though he was, the king's son suddenly became faint on hearing of death, and, leaning with his shoulder against the top of the chariot rail, he said in a melodious voice:--

"This is the end appointed for all creatures, and yet the world throws off fear and takes no heed. Hardened, I ween, are men's hearts; for they are in good cheer, as they fare along the road.

"Therefore, charioteer, let our chariot be turned back; for it is not the time or place for pleasure-resorts. For how could a man of intelligence be heedless here in the hour of calamity, when once he knows of destruction?"

Though the king's son spoke to him thus, he not merely did not turn back but in accordance with the king's command went on to the Padmaṣaṇḍa grove, which had been provided with special attractions.

There the prince saw that lovely grove like the grove of Nandana, with young trees in full bloom, with intoxicated koils flitting joyously about, with pavilions and tanks beautiful with lotuses.

. . .

Then the women went forth from the city garden, their eyes dancing with excitement, to meet the king's son, as if he were a bridegroom arriving.

And, as they approched him, their eyes opened wide in wonder and they welcomed him respectfully with hands folded like lotus-buds.

And they stood around him, their minds absorbed in love, and seemed to drink him in with eyes that were moveless and blossomed wide in ecstasy.

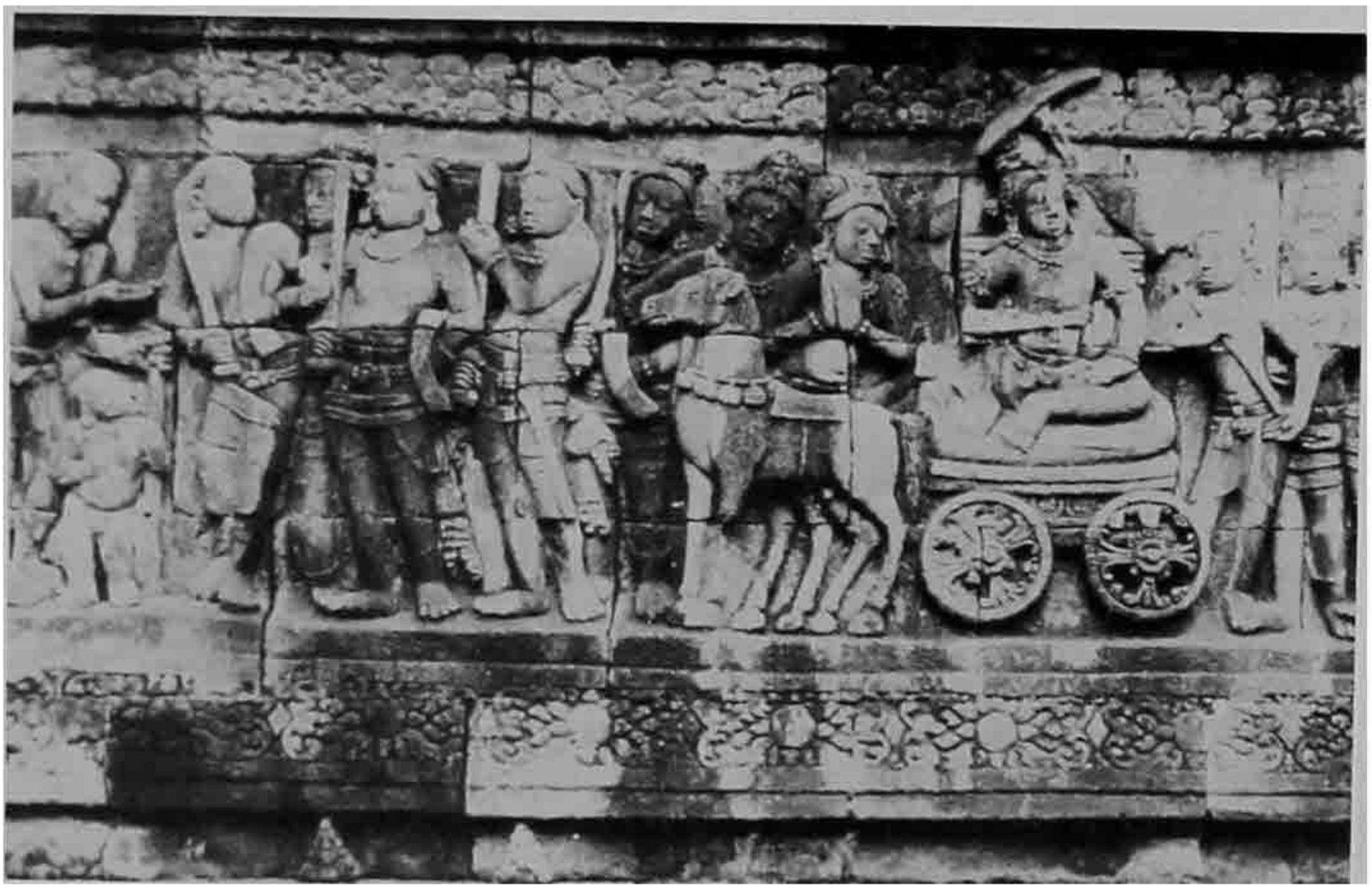
For the glory of the brilliant signs on his person, as of ornaments born on him, made the women deem him to be the god of love in bodily form.

. . .

Then some of the young women there, pretending to be under the influence of intoxication, touched him with their firm, rounded, close-set, charming breasts.

One made a false stumble and clasped him by force with her tender arm-creepers, which hung down loosely from her drooping shoulders.

Another, whose copper-colored lower lip smelt of spirituous liquor, whispered in his ear, "Listen to a secret."



Pl. 29. Encounter with an Aged Man. Borobudur, Java, c. 800 A.D. (lava stone).

> Another, who was all wet with unguents, said as if commanding him, 'Make a line here," in the hope of winning the touch of his hand.[2]
>
> . . .
>
> Thus these young women, to whose minds love had given free rein, assailed the prince with wiles of every kind.
>
> But despite such allurements the prince firmly guarded his senses, and in his perturbation over the inevitability of death, was neither rejoiced nor distressed.
>
> He, the supreme man, saw that they had no firm footing in the real truth, and with mind that was at the same time both perturbed and steadfast he thus meditated:--
>
> "Do these women then not understand the transitoriness of youth, that they are so inebriated with their own beauty, which old age will destroy?
>
> . . .
>
> "For what rational being would stand or sit or lie at ease, still less laugh, when he knows of old age, disease and death?"[3]

These Encounters crucially altered the life of the young prince. No longer content with a life of luxury, he came to dwell on the idea of renouncing the world and leaving his kingdom to become an ascetic. Several accounts and depictions include a fourth encounter with a tranquil monk, whose life becomes the model for the young prince.[4] The Encounters portray in concrete, literal form the psychological encounters of the prince with the problems of existence. However, the "Sūtra of the Noble Search" in the Pāli *Majjhimanikāya* describes his conversion in general, abstract terms (Thomas 1927:51-52). Its references to old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and impurity are within a philosophic, metaphoric context. Probably from such early accounts as this, the Encounters as a literal, biographical series of events arose.

The Encounters are an important subject in Buddhist art. At Sāñcī, it is the grand procession of the prince which is portrayed (Zimmer 1955, vol. 2, pl. 9). Women look on and sigh at his beauty, while men fold their hands in a gesture of respect. In a Gandhāran relief from Sargan, the encounter with a dead man and subsequent vow to depart from the palace and become an ascetic are portrayed (see Franz 1965, pl. 179). The meetings with an old man, sick man, and dead man are sculpted on the facade of Ajantā Cave 1

(Ghosh 1967, pl. K). All four encounters can be seen at Borobuḍur; the relief showing the meeting with an aged man is reproduced here (pl. 29). The four meetings are also depicted at Pagān in Burma, at Yün-Kang, in various illustrated *Kako Genzai Inga Kyō* texts, and at Tun-Huang (pl. 28).[5]

NOTES

1. *Lalitavistara*, Mitra, p. 80. This is proclaimed by the devas on the Bodhisattva's virtues.

2. This delirium of adoring love, and the language used to describe it, is the prototype for love of the maidens for the god Krishna in Hindu literature and art (see Spink 1971).

3. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, pp. 32-53, trans. Johnston. Reprinted by permission of Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

4. *Lalitavistara*, Krom, pp. 162-63; and *Nidānakathā*, p. 78.

5. De Silva-Vigier 1955, pls. 32-35 (Pagān, Ānanda Temple); Chavannes 1913, pl. CVIII at Yün-Kang Cave 6 (French numbering system, Cave 11). The encounter with a sick man is reproduced in an *Inga Kyō* manuscript of the eighth century (Jōbonrendai-ji, Kyoto), in Shoten 1969*a*, vol. 1, pl. 137. Its composition and figural style bear distinct resemblance to Chinese prototypes such as the Tun-Huang silk painting depicted in plate 28.

The thoughtful struggle onward,
and delight not in abode:
like swans who leave a lake,
do they leave house and home.[1]

Pl. 30. The Great Departure. Wat Chaithit, Thonburī, Thailand, c. 19th cen. (wall painting).

THE GREAT DEPARTURE

As [the prince] thus considered thoroughly these faults of sickness, old age, and death which belong to all living beings, all the joy which he had felt in the activity of his vigor, his youth, and his life, vanished in a moment.

He did not rejoice, he did not feel remorse; he suffered no hesitation, indolence, nor sleep; he felt no drawing towards the qualities of desire; he hated not nor scorned another.[2]

. . .

Then stepping like a lion he went towards the king who was attended by his numerous counsellors. . . .

Prostrating himself, with folded hands, he addressed him, "Grant me graciously thy permission, O lord of men,--I wish to become a wandering mendicant for the sake of liberation, since separation is appointed for me."

Having heard his words, the king shook like a tree struck by an elephant, and having seized his folded hands which were like a lotus, he thus addressed him in a voice choked with tears:

. . .

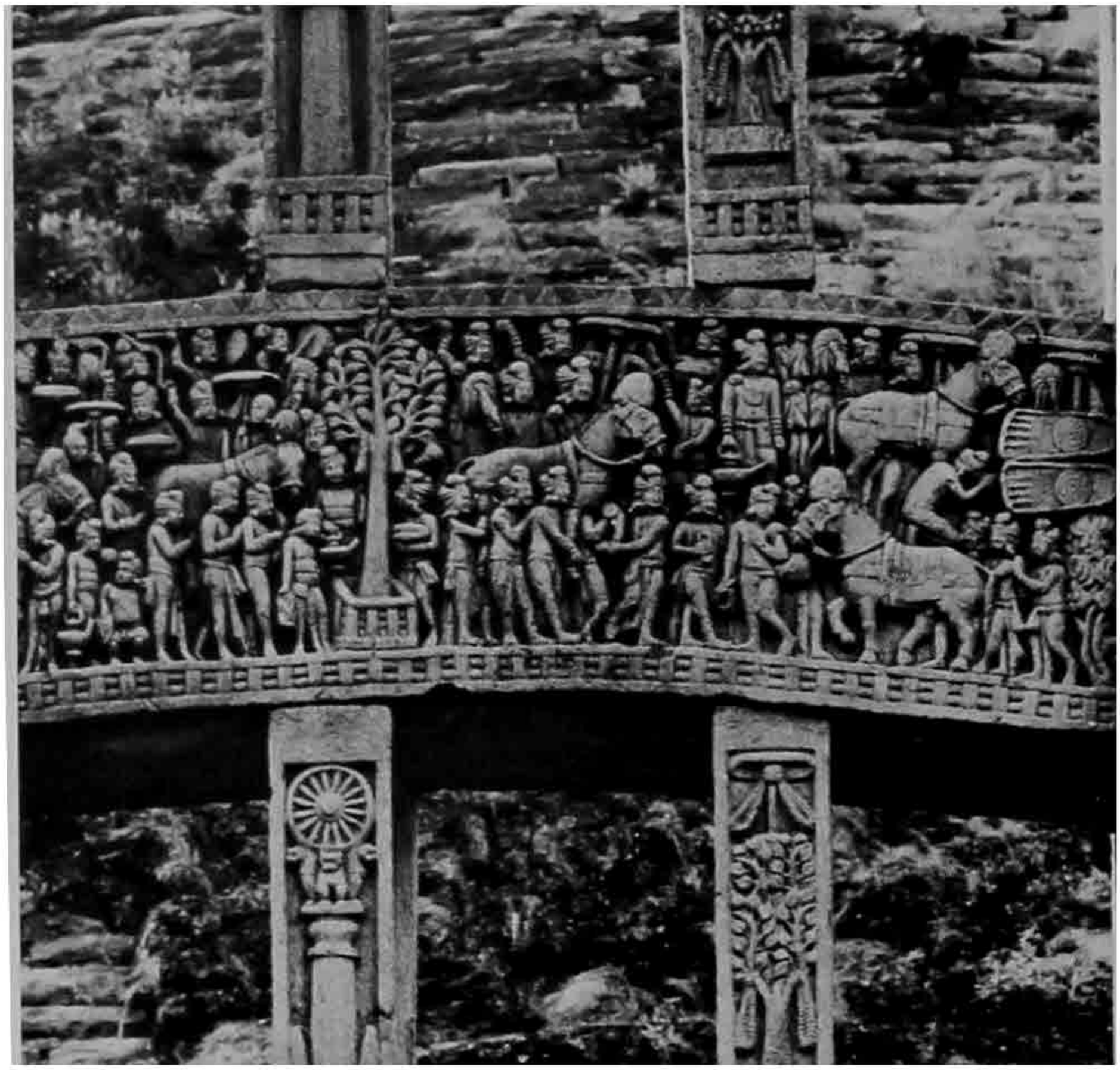
"It is high time for me to practice religion, O my child of loved qualities, leaving my royal glory to thee who art well worthy to be distinguished by it; but thy religion, O firm striding hero, is to be accomplished by heroism; it would be irreligion if thou wert to leave thine own father."

. . .

Having heard these words of the king, he made his reply in a voice soft like a sparrow's: "If thou wilt be my surety, O king, against four contingencies, I will not betake myself to the forest.

"Let not my life be subject to death, and let not disease impair this health of mine; let not old age attack my youth, and let not misfortune destroy my weal."

When his son uttered a speech so hard to be understood, the king of the Śakyas thus replied:



The *yakṣas* carrying the prince and his horse into the forest, the charioteer bowing before the Buddha-to-be, and the return past the Bodhi tree to the palace.

Pl. 31. The Great Departure. Stūpa 1 (Great Stūpa), Sāñcī, India, c. 1st cen. B.C. (sandstone, det.).

"Abandon this idea bent on departure; extravagant desires are only ridiculous."

Then he who was firm as Mount Meru addressed his father: "If this is impossible, then this course of mine is not to be hindered; it is not right to lay hold of one who would escape from a house that is on fire."

. . .

Then having been duly instructed by the counsellors, with all respect and affection, according to the sāstras, and being thus forbidden with tears by his father, the prince, sorrowing, entered into his palace.[3]

There he was gazed at by his wives with restless eyes, whose faces were kissed by their dangling earrings, and whose bosoms were shaken with their thick-coming sighs,--as by so many young fawns.

. . .

Then by the power of the heavenly beings most excellent in self-mortification, the Akaniṣṭhas, who knew the purpose of his heart, deep sleep was suddenly thrown on that company of women and their limbs and gestures became distorted.

. . .

Then having thus seen these young women thus lying distorted and with uncontrolled gestures,--however excellent their forms and graceful their appearance,--the king's son felt moved with scorn.

. . .

Thus to him having recognized that difference there arose a desire to escape in the night; and then the gods, knowing his purpose, caused the door of the palace to fly open.

. . .

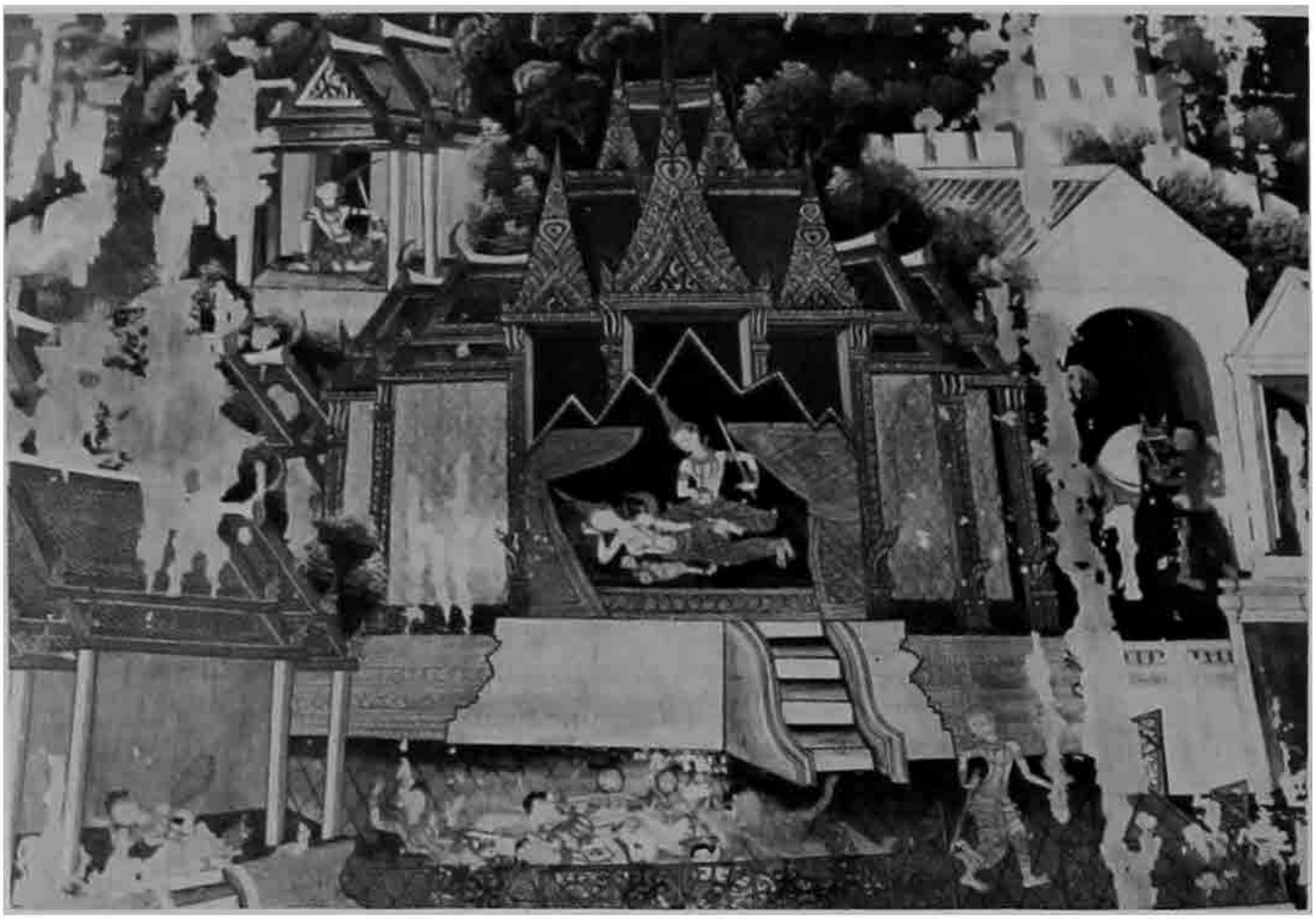
Having awakened his horse's attendant, the swift Chandaka, he thus addressed him: "Bring me quickly my horse Kanthaka, I wish today to go hence to attain immortality."

. . .

Then that good steed, avoiding all noises which would sound startling in the dead of night and awaken the household,--all sound of his jaws hushed and his neighing silenced,--went forth, planting his hurrying steps at full speed.

With their lotus-like hands, whose forearms were adorned with golden bracelets, the *yakṣas*, with their bodies bent down, threw lotuses and bore up his hoofs as he rushed in startled haste.

The city roads which were closed with heavy gates and bars, and which could be with difficulty opened



The prince arises from the bed of his wife and son, observes the sleeping women, and goes to meet his waiting groom and horse.

Pl. 32. The Great Departure. Wat Khanǭnnụa, Ayutthayā, Thailand, c. 19th cen. (wall painting).

even by elephants, flew open of their own accord without noise, as the prince went through.

Firm in his resolve and leaving behind without hesitation his father who turned ever towards him, and his young son, his affectionate people and his unparalleled magnificence, he then went forth out of his father's city.

> Then he with his eyes long and like a full-blown lotus, looking back on the city, uttered a sound like a lion, "Till I have seen the further shore of birth and death I will never again enter the city called after Kapila."[4]

This beautiful account of the prince's dismay at the transitory nature of life and his subsequent determination to become

a wandering monk is from the *Buddhacarita*. As in the Four Encounters account, also from the *Buddhacarita*, the loving relationship between the king and his son instills a human pathos to the story which so often is absent in other episodes that accentuate the divine and glorious over the human.

Although unstated in the *Buddhacarita*, and in the other texts, there is an implicit, psychological parallel to the Encounters which affirms the desire of Gautama to depart. The uncontrolled gestures of his wives in the chaos of sleep recall the ugliness of the Encounters; the loveliness even of royal men and women fades quickly, as day into night.

The Great Departure was frequently represented in Buddhist imagery. An aniconic relief from Sāñcī shows the departure from the city gates, procession through the forest, and return of Gautama's horse after leaving his master to his new life (pl. 31). *Yakṣa*s, or demigods, as mentioned in the texts, hold up the hoofs of the horse to avoid waking the city. An umbrella is raised over the "invisible" Bodhisattva on his flight, then deposited next to him as the charioteer and *yakṣa*s pay homage to their magnificent lord (the Bodhisattva is indicated by the monumental footprints incised with the Wheel of the Law). It is possible that the central tree, garlanded and enclosed to indicate holy ground, represents the sacred tree under which Gautama attained *bodhi* [Enlightenment].

There are many surviving reliefs of the Great Departure from the Amarāvatī region and from Kushan Gandhāra; frequently these are combined with scenes of the sleeping women (see Kramrisch 1954, pl. 39; and Ingholt 1957, pl. 39).

Three Thai paintings of the Great Departure are reproduced here; it is interesting to compare both the constants and the divergences within the conventionalized style used for these sacred paintings (pls. 30, 32, 33). One of these paintings, from Ayutthayā, portrays the prince arising from the bed of his sleeping wife and child, looking at them fondly as he silently leaves; walking past and gazing at the sleeping women, their arms spread in disarray; then proceeding to where his groom and horse await (pl. 32).

A detail from a Borobuḍur relief and two of the Thai paintings reproduced here portray the prince surrounded by *yakṣa*s, who hold the feet of his steed (pls. 30, 33, 34). By the repetitious poses of the gods, with their arms and legs bent, a visual staccato effect is set up, simulating heavenly flight and speed. This dynamic quality is quite unlike the static Sāñcī relief, in which the *yakṣa*s seem burdened holding up the stiff legs of the weighty horse (pl. 31). We know that the Borobuḍur relief follows the

Māra, the demon, and enemy of Buddhism, tries to prevent the Great Departure.

Pl. 33. The Great Departure. Thailand, c. 17th cen. (painting on silk, det.). Musée Guimet, Paris.

Pl. 34. The Great Departure. Borobuḍur, Java, c. 800 A.D. (lava stone, det.).

Lalitavistara (Krom), which stresses the glorious, divine qualities of the Life of the Buddha story; perhaps the visual sense of speed and magical, heavenly flight in the Southeast Asian works relates to their textual origins.

The Great Departure was also portrayed in East Asia. In Cave 6 at Yün-Kang, a set of reliefs portrays the Bodhisattva by the sleeping women; in a gesture of wonderment at their disarray, he brings his finger to his mouth. The next relief depicts the prince on his horse, while the *yakṣas* support him, as he leaves the city. The city gate can be seen in the background (Chavannes 1913, pls. CX-CXII; and Ashton 1924, pl. XV, fig. 2). Another Chinese Great Departure scene, sculpted about a century after the Yün-Kang piece, is extant in the Nanking Museum (Shoten 1969*b*, vol. 1, pl. 168).

The Great Departure account from the *Buddhacarita* given above concludes with a vow by Gautama not to enter the city of Kapilavastu until he has attained Enlightenment; we shall see in the following episodes that he keeps his vow and achieves his aim.

NOTES

1. *Dhammapada*, Edmunds, p. 22, v. 91.

2. This equanimity is the Buddhist response to the illusory nature of human life, although the shock and disgust with which the young prince regards old age, sickness, death, and the disarray of his sleeping women (below) is contradictory to this passage.

3. The *śāstras* are philosophical commentaries on the scriptures; the passage implies that Śuddhodana and his counsellors have consulted the Vedic texts on the duty of a prince to his parent and kingdom.

4. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, pp. 51-61, trans. Cowell.

I undertook resolute effort, unconfused mindfulness was set up, but my body was unquiet and uncalmed, even through the painful striving that overwhelmed me. Nevertheless such painful feeling as arose did not overpower my mind.[1]

Pl. 35. Śākyamuni after years of ascetic practices. Chinese, c. 1300 A.D. (lacquered wood). The Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit.

AUSTERITIES

After departing from his family and abandoning the rights to kingship, Siddhārtha Gautama traveled through northern India in search of a teacher and discipline to resolve his quest. He found several teachers, but yet was not content, and left them to seek Enlightenment on his own:

> Thus did he remain unsatisfied after he had heard the doctrine of Arāḍa; then having decided it to be incomplete, he turned away.
>
> Seeking to know the true distinction, he went to the hermitage of Udraka, but he gained no clear understanding from his treatment of the soul.
>
> . . .
>
> Having quitted his hermitage, fully resolved in his purpose, and seeking final bliss, he next visited the hermitage, called a city, of the royal sage Gayā.[2]
>
> Then on the pure bank of the Nairañganā [river] the saint [Gautama] whose every effort was pure fixed his dwelling, bent as he was on a lonely habitation.
>
> Five mendicants, desiring liberation, came up to him when they beheld him there, just as the objects of the senses come up to a percipient who has gained wealth and health by his previous merit.
>
> Being honored by these disciples who were dwelling in that family, as they bowed reverently with their bodies bent low in humility, as the mind is honored by the restless senses,
>
> And thinking, "this may be the means of abolishing birth and death," he at once commenced a series of difficult austerities by fasting.
>
> For six years, vainly trying to attain merit, he practised self-mortification, performing many rules of abstinence, hard for a man to carry out.
>
> At the hours for eating, he, longing to cross the world whose farther shore is so difficult to reach, broke his vow with single jujube fruits, sesame seeds, and rice.[3]
>
> . . .

Having only skin and bone remaining, with his fat, flesh and blood entirely wasted, yet, though diminished, he still shone with undiminished grandeur like the ocean.

Then the seer, having his body evidently emaciated to no purpose in a cruel self-mortification, --dreading continued existence, thus reflected in his longing to become a Buddha:

"This is not the way to passionlessness, nor to perfect knowledge, nor to liberation . . .

"But that [perfect knowledge] cannot be attained by one who has lost his strength,"--so resuming his care for his body, he next pondered thus, how best to increase his bodily vigor:

"Wearied with hunger, thirst, and fatigue, with his mind no longer self-possessed through fatigue, how should one who is not absolutely calm reach the end which is to be attained by his mind?

. . .

"True meditation is produced in him whose mind is self-possessed and at rest,--to him whose thoughts are engaged in meditation the exercise of perfect contemplation begins at once.

"By contemplation are obtained those conditions through which is eventually gained that supreme calm, undecaying, immortal state, which is so hard to be reached."

Having thus resolved, "this means is based upon eating food," the wise seer of unbounded wisdom, having made up his mind to accept the continuance of life,

And having bathed, thin as he was, slowly came up the bank of the Nairañganā, supported as by a hand by the trees on the shore, which bent down the ends of their branches in adoration.

Now at that time Nandabalā [Sujātā], the daughter of the leader of the herdsmen, impelled by the gods, with a sudden joy risen in her heart, had just come near,[4]

. . .

She, having her joy increased by her faith, with her lotus-like eyes opened wide, bowed down before him and persuaded him to take some milk.

By partaking that food having made her obtain the full reward of her birth, he himself became capable of gaining the highest knowledge, all his six senses being now satisfied.

The seer, having his body now fully robust, together with his glorious fame, one beauty and one majesty being equally spread in both, shone like the ocean and the moon.

Thinking that he had returned to the world the five mendicants left him, as the five elements leave the wise soul when it is liberated.

Accompanied only by his own resolve, having fixed his mind on the attainment of perfect knowledge, he went to the root of an Asvattha [bodhi] tree, where the surface of the ground was covered with young grass.

. . .

Then he sat down on his hams in a posture, immovably firm, and with his limbs gathered into a mass like a sleeping serpent's hood, exclaiming, "I will not rise from this position on the earth until I have obtained my utmost aim."

> Then the dwellers in heaven burst into unequalled joy; the herds of beasts and the birds uttered no cry; the trees moved by the wind made no sound, when the holy one took his seat firm in his resolve.[5]

This episode is extensively treated in all the major texts on the life of the Buddha and was also an important and common theme in Buddhist imagery. All texts relate Gautama's dissatisfaction with his various teachers, his austerities, and the realization of the uselessness of severe self-mortification. Several texts contain more specific and lengthy descriptions of the austerities and appearance of the fasting Gautama than does the *Buddhacarita* text quoted above.[6] One such text is the *Mahāvastu*, in which the Buddha recalls the years of his austerities and describes them to his followers in graphic detail:

> And as I thus restrained and curbed body and mind with thought, perspiration poured out of my armpits and fell hot and steaming to the ground. From my face and my brow the perspiration poured out and fell hot and steaming to the ground. . . .
>
> Then monks, I said to myself, "Let me now practise the breathholding meditation.". . . And when I thus stopped breathing in and out through the

Pl. 36. Shussan-(no)-Shaka [Descent from the mountain]. Japanese, c. 1300 (hanging scroll, ink on paper, copy after a 12th-cen. Chinese prototype). Seattle Art Museum, Seattle.

> mouth and nostrils, a loud and great roar rushed within both my ears.
>
> . . .
>
> I took one single jujube fruit for my meal. Then this body of mine became exceedingly lean. . . . I would try, monks, to grasp the front of my body, but it would be my backbone that I held in my grasp. I would try, monks, to stand erect, and immediately I would tumble forwards in a heap.[7]

Depictions of the fasting Buddha-to-be are particularly striking in Gandhāran examples, characterized as they are by a startling naturalism of the starving body. The grim, almost fierce, dedication to self-mortification for the overcoming of the demands of the flesh is especially expressive in a sculpture from the Lahore Museum (Zimmer 1955, vol. 2, pl. 65). The eyes are lost in deep, hollow sockets; the mouth is set firmly. His beard is grizzled and neck muscles lean and taut. Veins seem to crawl over the surface of the exposed ribs, while the undulating robe recalls the patterns of veins and bone. The severe discipline conveyed in these features is enhanced by the figure sitting slightly off center, as if ready, but totally unwilling, to collapse. It is a close visual equivalent to such texts as the *Mahāvastu* (excerpts quoted above) and *Mahāsaccakasūtra* (pp. 64-68; see note 6) which dwell at length on the appearance of the fasting Gautama.

A different impression is conveyed by a Vietnamese work of the same subject (Patkó and Rév 1967, pl. 116). The eyes are closed, and the pose is disciplined, yet relaxed. Here, we feel, is a holy sage in profound meditation, oblivious to hunger or the passage of time. The image is peaceful; contemplative. The effect is one of spiritual calm, quite unlike the intense energy with which the Gandhāran fasting Gautama fights the tormenting demands of the body.

With India's long tradition of venerating ascetic practices, it is not surprising that the Gandhāran images should convey admiration for the arduousness of asceticism. However, because such spiritual practices were not traditional in East Asia, more philosophically contemplative images, such as that of the Vietnamese piece, fit the East Asian cultural characters well.

Two types of representations developed in China. Both arose in the Sung and Yüan periods, from the tenth through the fourteenth centuries, as the historical Buddha (Gautama,

or Śakyamuni) regained his original importance under Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism. Such images expressed the central Ch'an theme of the difficulty of obtaining Enlightenment, even for the Buddha himself. His heroic efforts and self-reliance served as an example for others striving for Enlightenment.

The first of these two Chinese types generally shows Gautama with his head bent, and hands on his knees, pensive and discouraged with his six years of austerity.[8] He is in the moment of recognition of the futility of ascetic practices and sits in a poignantly quiet pose, near the point of despair, before realizing the true path to Enlightenment (pl. 35). The second of the Chinese types depicts him descending from a mountain, still gaunt from his austerities (pl. 36).[9] It can be interpreted either as a realization that Enlightenment cannot be obtained through austerities in isolation, or that the way to be free from the actualities of life is to live among men. Both interpretations have been utilized by Chinese and Japanese followers of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism.[10]

Occasionally, such as at Pagān and in certain Gandhāran examples, two figures will appear beside a depiction of the fasting Gautama (see Duroiselle 1915, pl. XXXVI[45]; and Ingholt 1957, pl. 55). These follow either such a text as the *Lalitavistara* (Krom, p. 86), in which queen Māyā and various devas fear for Gautama's life and plead with him to accept food, or the *Mahāsaccakasūtra* (see note 6), in which the devas approach him to feed him ambrosia through the pores of his skin. From the *Mahāsaccakasūtra*:

> Some divinities seeing me then said, "the ascetic Gautama is dead." Some divinities said, "not dead is the ascetic Gautama, but he is dying." Some said, "not dead is the ascetic Gautama, nor dying. The ascetic Gautama is an arhat; such is the behavior of an arhat."[11]
>
> Then I thought, what if I refrain altogether from food. So the divinities approached me and said, "Sir, do not refrain altogether from food. If you do so, we will feed you with divine food through the pores of your hair, and with this keep you alive." Then I thought that if I were to undertake to refrain altogether from eating, and these divinities were to feed me . . . this would be acting falsely on my part. So I refused, saying, no more of this.[12]

The final theme related to the Austerities of Gautama is the bath and acceptance of milk rice. Both refresh the Bodhisattva

and prepare him for that ultimately successful meditation which culminates in his Enlightenment. At Borobuḍur both the bath and acceptance of Sujātā's (Nandabalā's) gift are depicted (Krom 1926, pls. 84-85). Among the Indian examples are several depictions of Sujātā's presentation from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, and a painting done many centuries later, in our own century, by Abanindranath Tagore of Sujātā and the Buddha-to-be (Chakravorty 1964:vi and facing plate).

NOTES

1. Thomas 1927:64; translation of the *Mahāsaccaka-sutta* (*Mahāsaccakasūtra*) from the *Mahāyamaka-vagga* of the Pāli *Majjhimanikāya*. Reprinted by permission of Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd.

2. The city is named for Gayā, but Gautama meditated alone at Gayā (Bodhgayā) without the aid of any teacher.

3. Note that Gautama again refers to the "farther shore" (see also the closing paragraph in the *Buddhacarita* account quoted in the "Great Departure" episode). The *Prajñāpāramitā* [Wisdom of the yonder shore] Sūtras are important Mahāyānist texts; see "The Larger and the Smaller *Pragñâ-pâramitâ-hridaya-sûtra*[s] (*Prajñāparamitā* Sūtras)," trans. F. Max Müller, in Müller 1894:147-54.

4. The girl is named Sujātā in the *Lalitavistara*, *Mahāvastu*, and the *Nidānakathā*; in the *Buddhacarita* and *Divyāvadāna* (Williams 1975:187), she is called Nandabalā. The gift is usually milk mixed with rice.

5. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, pp. 132-36, trans. Cowell.

6. See Thomas (1927:62-68) for a translation of the *Mahāsaccaka-sutta* (*Mahāsaccakasūtra*) from the *Mahāyamaka-vagga* of the Pāli *Majjhimanikāya*; see also *Nidānakathā*, pp. 88-96. For a translation of the *Lalitavistara*, see Krom 1927(1):183-91.

7. The *Mahāvastu*, vol. 2, pp. 120-22. Reprinted by permission of The Pali Text Society.

8. There are many such depictions, usually in the form of small-scale, in-the-round sculpture (not larger than about twelve inches in height). For examples, see plate 35 in this volume, and Siren (1930, vol. 3, pl. 120[*a*, *b*], showing the Philadelphia University Museum's piece and the Royal Ontario Museum's piece; see also Lefebvre d'Argencé (1974:294, pl. 156) for the Brundage Collection late Yüan-early Ming example.

9. The most famous, and one of the earliest, of these hanging scrolls is one by Liang K'ai (early thirteenth century); this and various other examples are reproduced in Brinker 1973. See also plate 36 in this volume.

10. Brinker (1973:22) notes these two interpretations; the second of these considers this scene to be after Śakyamuni's ("Shaka," in Japanese) Enlightenment. However, not all colophons to the paintings support the post-Enlightenment view.

    The somber expression held by most of the Śakyamuni figures can indicate either the same exhaustion and disappointment with six wasted years as does the sculpted type of plate 35, or, as Brinker (p. 24) suggests in the post-Enlightenment interpretation, that he anticipates that his pure truth will not remain immaculate.

    Brinker does not mention several factors which may play a part in the Shussan Shaka interpretations. First, mountains are holy places and the abodes of gods and sages in both Chinese and Japanese cosmology, which would imply that Śakyamuni descends with the truth of Enlightenment, or at least with the seed and awareness of the true path and method. Also, the "Shussan Shaka" depictions, particularly the later ones, often surround Śakyamuni with a faint halo (pl. 26) indicating further his holiness, or potential for holiness. It is interesting also that many texts, including the *Mahāvastu* and *Mahāsaccakasūtra* (see notes 6 and 7) include an Enlightenment within the Austerities section. This, at least in most traditions, is not the full Enlightenment. The actual Enlightenment comes after the confrontation with Māra (next episode), though it also should be remembered that Māra as an outside influence and "devil" figure was not so important to the Ch'an interpretation of the Buddha's life. Perhaps these "Shussan Shaka" works were regarded as showing either the discouragement with austerities, or as marking the beginning of a gradual Enlightenment. This latter interpretation would be consistent with the point of view of various Ch'an schools. It is also consistent with a Ch'an mentality that a certain elusiveness of interpretation and symbolism may surround the image and its cryptic colophon inscriptions.

11. An *arhat* (*arhant*) is a "worthy one," a holy man who traverses the path to Enlightenment.

12. Thomas 1949:65; translation of the *Mahāsaccaka-sutta* (*Mahāsaccakasūtra*) from the *Mahāyamaka-vagga* of the Pāli *Majjhimanikāya*. Reprinted by permission of Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd.

"Difficult is the way of exertion, difficult to pass, difficult to enter upon"; saying these verses Māra[1] *stood near Buddha.*

To Māra thus speaking Bhagavan[2] *said this:*
"O thou friend of the indolent, thou wicked one, for what purpose hast thou come here?

. . .

"Lust thy first army is called, discontent the second, thy third is called hunger and thirst, thy fourth desire.

"Thy fifth is called sloth and drowsiness, thy sixth cowardice, thy seventh doubt, thy eighth hypocrisy and stupor, . . .

. . .

*"This army of thine, which the world of men and gods cannot conquer, I will crush with understanding as (one crushes) an unbaked earthen pot with a stone."*3

Pl. 37. Temptation by Māra. Stūpa 1 (Great Stūpa), Sāñcī, India, c. 1st cen. B.C. (sandstone).

THE TEMPTATION BY MĀRA

When the great sage, sprung from a line of royal sages, sat down there [under the Bodhi tree] with his soul fully resolved to obtain the highest knowledge, the whole world rejoiced; but Māra, the enemy of the good law, was afraid.

. . .

His three sons, Confusion, Gaiety, and Pride, and his three daughters, Lust, Delight, and Thirst, asked of him the reason of his despondency, and he thus made answer unto them:

"This sage, wearing the armor of resolution, and having drawn the arrow of wisdom with the barb of truth, sits yonder intending to conquer my realms,--hence is this despondency of my mind.

"If he succeeds in overcoming me and proclaims to the world the path of final bliss, all this my realm will today become empty. . . .

"While, therefore, he stands within my reach and while his spiritual eyesight is not yet attained, I will assail him to break his vow as the swollen might of a river assails a dam."

Then having seized his flower-made bow and his five infatuating arrows, he drew near to the root of the Aśvattha [Bodhi] tree with his children, he the great disturber of the minds of living beings.

. . .

Then Māra called to mind his own army, wishing to work the overthrow of the Śakya saint; and his followers swarmed round, wearing different forms and carrying arrows, trees, darts, clubs, and swords in their hands;

Having the faces of boars, fishes, horses, asses, and camels, of tigers, bears, lions, and elephants,--one-eyed, many-faced, three-headed,--with protuberant bellies and speckled bellies;

. . .

Such were the troops of demons who encircled the root of the Bodhi tree on every side, eager to seize it and destroy it, awaiting the command of their lord.

Beholding in the first half of the night that battle of Māra and the bull of the Śakya race, the heavens did not shine and the earth shook and the ten regions of space flashed flames and roared.

A wind of intense violence blew in all directions, the stars did not shine, the moon gave no light, and a deeper darkness of night spread around, and all the oceans were agitated.

. . .

When they saw the foot of the Bodhi tree crowded with that host of Māra, intent on doing harm,--the sky was filled with the cry raised by all the virtuous beings who desired the world's liberation.

But the great sage having beheld that army of Māra thus engaged in an attack on the knower of the Law [himself] remained untroubled and suffered no perturbation, like a lion seated in the midst of oxen.

Then Māra commanded his excited army of demons to terrify him; and forthwith that host resolved to break down his determination with their various powers.

Some with many tongues hanging out and shaking, with sharp-pointed savage teeth and eyes like the disk of the sun, with wide-yawning mouths and upright ears like spikes,--they stood round trying to frighten him.

. . .

But with all these various scorching assaults on his body and his mind, and all these missiles showered down upon him, the Śakya saint did not in the least degree move from his posture, clasping firmly his resolution as [if] a kinsman.

. . .

Then some being of invisible shape, but of pre-eminent glory, standing in the heavens,--beholding Māra thus malevolent against the seer,--addressed him in a loud voice, unruffled by enmity:

"Take not on thyself, O Māra, this vain fatigue,--throw aside thy malevolence and retire to peace; this sage cannot be shaken by thee any more than the mighty mountain Meru by the wind.

"Pitying the world lying distressed amidst diseases and passions, he, the great physician, ought not to be hindered, who undergoes all his labors for the sake of the remedy knowledge.

. . .

"The tree of knowledge, whose roots go deep in firmness, and whose fibers are patience,--whose flowers are moral actions and whose branches are memory and thought,--and which gives out the law as its fruit,--surely when it is growing it should not be cut down.

"Him whose one desire is to deliver mankind bound in soul by the fast snares of illusion,--thy wish to overthrow him is not worthy, wearied as he is for the sake of unloosing the bonds of the world.

"Today is the appointed period of all those actions which have been performed by him for the sake of knowledge,--he is now seated on this seat just as all the previous saints have sat.[4]

"This is the navel of the earth's surface, endued [embued] with all the highest glory; there is no other spot of the earth than this,--the home of contemplation, the realm of well-being."

. . .

Having listened to his words, and having seen the unshaken firmness of the great saint, Māra departed dispirited and broken in purpose with those very arrows by which, O world, thou art smitten in thy heart.

. . .

When the wicked one thus fled vanquished, the different regions of the sky grew clear, the moon shone forth, showers of flowers fell down from the sky upon the earth, and the night gleamed out like a spotless maiden.[5]

This account from the *Buddhacarita* presents the events of the Temptation as generally agreed upon in depictions and texts. But, often it is the earth goddess, or the earth itself, rather than some "being of invisible shape" which attests to Gautama's spiritual strength and hastens the defeat of Māra. The two conceptions are related in their imagery of the earth's affirmation, for the "being of invisible shape" notes that the Buddha-to-be sits on the very navel of the earth's surface (see above), and

Pl. 38. Temptation by Māra. From a *Kako Genzai Inga Kyō* [Sūtra of cause and effect] manuscript, Japanese, last half of 13th cen. (handscroll, color on paper, det.). Mary and Jackson Burke Collection.

that his spirituality grows as the tree of knowledge. The *Lalitavistara* describes the witness of the earth goddess:

> The Bodhisattva spoke in a firm, deep, serious, gentle and sweet voice to Māra, the Evil One: "By thee, o Evil One, the kingdom of desire was acquired by one voluntary sacrifice, but I have offered many million *koṭi*s of willing sacrifices, arms, legs, eyes, the best limbs cut off and given to those who desired them, houses, riches, grain, couches, garments, pleasure gardens, many times given to those who asked for them, because I strove for the Salvation of all beings."[6] Then said Māra, the Evil One, to the Bodhisattva: "That I have made a sacrifice, willing and unimpeachable in a former life, thou art here my witness; but for thee, here is none as witness even with a single word; thou art conquered!" Then said the Bodhisattva: "I appeal to this mother of creatures, O Evil One." And as soon as she was touched by the Bodhisattva, this mighty earth trembled in six manners. Then the goddess of the great earth named Sthāvarā appeared, surrounded by [a] hundred *koṭi*s of earth goddesses, and while the whole earth shook, having split the surface near to the Bodhisattva, half of her person rose up, adorned with all her ornaments and bowing to the place where the Bodhisattva was, making a sĕmbah, she spoke to him thus: "It is so, great being, it is so as thou hast declared, we all are witnesses thereof."[7]

The monumental confrontation between the Bodhisattva and Māra caused the regions to roar and wind to blow in all directions; the oceans became agitated and the night spread a deep blackness (see above, *Buddhacarita*). It is one of the most important moments in the Buddha's life, and it marks the great climax and final hindrance for the Buddha-to-be; with the banishment of Māra the way was clear for the meditation leading to Enlightenment.

This was not the first, or final, time that Māra approached the Buddha, but it is the most famous and dramatic (Boyd 1975:79). These meetings had both a literal and a symbolic significance for the Buddhist adherents, as the varied writings on Māra reveal.

Māra embodies desire and the sensual life. His role is powerful, as sovereign of the worlds of men and of gods. God of death, he is also lord of the living, who are but the food of death. As such, he is the lord of rebirth and the enemy of Buddhism (Vallée Poussin 1928*b*:406-407).

Pl. 39. Temptation by Māra and Witness by the Earth Goddess. Wat Dusit, Thonburī, Thailand, 19th cen. (wall painting).

Māra blinds and perplexes; obstructs and interrupts; possesses and holds in bondage (Boyd 1975:77). Thus are men drawn towards sense desires, but whether an anthropomorphic Evil One actively entices them, or whether these desires and impediments are mainly internal, varies. In a text such as the *Jinacarita* (Medhaṅkara 1904-1905:49-50, esp. vv. 248, 263), Māra is as grotesque and evil as his demon army, described as "the foul-mouthed one" who, when defeated, fled "like a serpent with broken fangs." But, in the *Lalitavistara* (Mitra, p. 191), in an episode of the Prince Siddhartha, some sages actually mistake the prince for Māra, because of his great beauty. In visual imagery, also, Māra is often handsome and serene, unlike the hordes around him (pl. 37, center). And, in the *Padhānasūtra* (quoted with pl. 37), the armies are described not as a force of horrible demons, but a force of desire, doubt, and dullness of mind. In the *Buddhacarita* account given above, the armies are graphically portrayed as bizarre phantoms, "many-faced" and "three-headed," but the three sons and three daughters of Māra--Confusion, Pride, Lust, etc.--retain at least a certain metaphoric aspect. Thus, the *Buddhacarita* portrays a richly poetic evocation of what can be called "the dark night of the soul," and also teems with picturesque ghouls; each spoke to a segment of the faithful.

Because of the harrowing drama of such a climactic confrontation, the Temptation had a strong hold on the imagination and appears in innumerable depictions throughout Buddhist Asia. Compositionally, the depictions are generally similar, whether from South, Southeast, or East Asia. The Buddha-to-be sits frontally, calmly resisting the ploys of Māra and challenging the viewer into admiration for his strength. This resolve is formally enhanced by his anchorage at the very center, the most stable area of the composition, and by his firmly triangular pose, broken only by the reach of his hand to touch the earth and call it to witness.[8]

One of the earliest examples of the Temptation in art is at Sāñcī (pl. 37). Besides being aniconic, it is unusual in that the Bodhisattva and Bodhi tree are situated at the far left, rather than in the center. Māra sits in the central position, handsome and casually posed, in conversation with the Bodhisattva. Before him are devas and his sons and daughters; behind are the grotesque manifestations of sloth, pride, lust, etc.

Another early, aniconic image, from an area near Amarāvatī, depicts the throne of the Bodhisattva in dead center; the Bodhi tree rises in a majestic line above it, giving an impression of great stability and strength (see Deneck 1967, pl. 11). Surrounding this are the hordes of demons and sons and daughters of Māra. They assault him from the left side, but at right are shown

departing, heads bowed and arms folded in submission. This is the typical mode for depictions from the Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa regions (see Longhurst 1938, pl. XXIX[*b*]).

The Temptation was frequently depicted in Gandhāra, and often the armies appear very literally with the heads of camels, boars, elephants, etc., described in the *Buddhacarita* account above. Māra's daughters are not often shown in Gandhāran examples, though they do appear at Mathurā and in many other Temptation scenes.[9] One particularly interesting Gandhāran example, in the Freer Gallery of Art, shows Māra at far left, his hand to his head in thought, as if conjuring forth these demons (Foucher 1963, pl. 13).

In several caves at Ajantā the Temptation is painted in the shrine antechamber; for the monk himself trying to overcome the forces of desire and discontent, the Temptation must have been one of the most inspirational examples from the Buddha's life (Yazdani 1930-1955, vol. 1, pt.1, Cave 1, pls. XXVII-XXIX).

Several particularly elegant Indian pieces from the tenth and eleventh centuries show the Bodhisattva in the earth-touching pose (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) surrounded by small single figures meant as vignettes for major events in his life (Zimmer 1955, vol. 2, pl. 383). In such works, done when Buddhism was both at a new stage and near its decline in India, he calls witness in a much more generalized sense than the Temptation works discussed thus far. It abbreviates and distills the Temptation into a much broader context, in keeping with an icon of the Buddha's majesty and godliness.

The Temptation was also a common subject in East Asian Buddhist art. Several paintings from Tun-Huang portray it, and it appears in illustrated manuscripts of the *Kako Genzai Inga Kyō*, both in China and Japan (Tun-huang wên-we yen-chiu-so 1959, pl. 13; de Silva-Vigier 1955, pl. 28). Many copies of the *Inga Kyō*, with and without illustrations, were made in Japan in the eighth century. The *Inga Kyō* fell into disuse after the ninth century, when Amidism and Esoteric Buddhism dominated in Japan, but it enjoyed a revival in the thirteenth century when interest in classical traditions resumed (Murase 1975:44-45 and pls. 44-46). A section from one such scroll shows the Bodhisattva oblivious to the onslaught around him; the assault cannot penetrate his equanimity (pl. 38). Bizarre demons attack him from all sides, while Māra's daughters, beautiful and alluring, come forth holding skulls. Māra, dressed as a dignified noble (not shown in our detail) sits to the far right directing the action. As noted above, this centralized composition, with scores of demons surrounding the Bodhisattva, is very common in Temptation imagery.

The demon armies are again seen in a Thai painting of the Temptation, but they fall back in the face of the Bodhisattva's calm and the eruption of the earth goddess (pl. 39). She rises from "the navel of the earth" (see the *Buddhacarita* account given above) upon which the meditating Bodhisattva sits. She wrings her hair, drenched with libations and merits of the Bodhisattva's previous lives, and drowns the chaotic forces of Māra.

NOTES

1. Māra is the "Evil One," lord of desires in Buddhism, who tries to distract the Bodhisattva from his Way and destiny.

   Note that, though technically still a bodhisattva, this text (and many others) refers to Gautama as a Buddha. Because he is the center of worship, such historical and technical considerations often dissolve.

2. "Bhagavan" means "the world honored one," a title of respect for the Buddha. See Humphreys 1956:127.

3. "*Padhânasutta* [*Padhānasūtra*]," in *Dhammapada*, Müller, pp. 70-71.

4. As noted above, there have been, and will be, other Enlightened Ones (Buddhas); Gautama is the historical Buddha and founder of the religion, but the doctrine from earliest times held that his Enlightenment is not unique.

5. *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa, pp. 137-47, trans. Cowell.

6. This refers to such events as told in the Ṣaḍdanta, Śibi and Viśvāntara Jātakas (see Part One of this volume).

7. *Lalitavistara*, Krom, pp. 200-201. Reprinted by permission of Martinus Nijhoff, Institute KITLV, The Hague. In the *Nidānakathā* also, the earth witnesses the Bodhisattva's worth. See *Nidānakathā*, p. 101.

8. The Borobuḍur example is typical. See de Silva-Vigier 1955, pl. 68. Not all such Temptations depict the Bodhisattva touching the earth: he is often simply shown meditating, as in our plates 38 and 39.

9. Vogel 1909:153. Sometimes only the daughters are shown to indicate the Temptation; the armies are absent. For example, see Duroiselle 1915, pl. XXXVII.

Quiet his mind is,
quiet the speech and deed
of such, by thorough knowledge
emancipated, calmed.[1]

Pl. 40. The Buddha in Meditation. Anurādhapura, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), c. 6th-7th cen. A.D. (dolomite).

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In the late watch of the night when the day began to break, the Bodhisattva with such lofty comprehension, according to an insight that absorbed in unity of thought and time all that could be known, thought, achieved, seen and contemplated, attained the highest and most perfect Wisdom, and acquired the threefold knowledge.[2]

> Thereupon the gods spake: "Strew flowers, o friends, Bhagavān hath attained the Wisdom." Then the gods sons strewed divine flowers over the Tathāgata[3] till a knee-deep layer of the blossoms was formed.

There are several texts which describe in more intricate terms the processes through which the Bodhisattva passed in his ascent towards Enlightenment, but the above excerpt from the *Lalitavistara* expresses well the essential meaning.[4]

This total and all-encompassing knowledge, an abstract conception, could not be conveyed as such in visual examples. But the Enlightenment is implied in the Temptation, with the triumph of the Buddha over Māra. It is also suggested in the many aniconic reliefs from Bhārhut and Sāñcī, which feature swarms of gods ecstatically rejoicing and draping garlands around the seat of Enlightenment (see Marshall and Foucher, n.d., vol. 2, pls. LVIII[4] and LXI[3]). A similar theme is celebrated at Borobuḍur (Krom 1926, pls. 96-97). There are also many images of the Buddha in meditation, seated cross-legged with his hands in his lap (*dyana mudrā*) (pl. 40). These may be interpreted as representing the Buddha in the profound meditation of Enlightenment, or, more generally, as images done from reverence for the timeless and central message of Buddhism as it became known in the Buddha's meditation.

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1. *Dhammapada*, Edmunds, p. 23, v. 96.

2. The threefold knowledge consists of: knowledge of the past, knowledge of the present, and knowledge of the chain of causation which leads to the origin of evil. See *Nidānakathā*, p. 102.

3. "Tathāgata" as a name for a Buddha means the "Great Being." See Chalmers 1898:103.

4. *Lalitavistara*, Krom, p. 205. Reprinted by permission of Martinus Nijhoff, Institute KITLV, The Hague. The *Mahāvastu* (vol. 1, pp. 183-87) and *Kako Genzai Inga Kyō* (McGovern 1923:170-171) are among the most technically descriptive.

Beneath the Mucalinda tree he caused the serpent king's thoughts to expand like lotus blossoms.[1]

Pl. 41. The Buddha Protected by the Nāga Mucalinda (The Buddha of Krahi). Thailand, 1183 A.D. (bronze). National Museum, Bangkok.

SOJOURN WITH MUCALINDA

And the blessed Buddha sat cross-legged at the foot of the Bodhi tree uninterruptedly during seven days, enjoying the bliss of emancipation.

. . .

Then the Blessed One, at the end of those seven days, arose from that state of meditation, and went from the foot of the Bodhi tree to the Agapāla banyan tree. And when he had reached it, he sat cross-legged at the foot of the Agapāla banyan tree uninterruptedly during seven days, enjoying the bliss of emancipation.

. . .

Then the Blessed One, at the end of those seven days, arose from that state of meditation, and went from the foot of the Agapāla banyan tree to the Mucalinda tree. And when he had reached it, he sat cross-legged at the foot of the Mucalinda tree uninterruptedly during seven days, enjoying the bliss of emancipation.

At that time a great cloud appeared out of season, rainy weather which lasted seven days, cold weather, storms and darkness. And the Nāga king Mucalinda came out from his abode, and seven times encircled the body of the Blessed One with his windings, and kept extending his large hood over the Blessed One's head, thinking to himself: 'May no coldness touch the Blessed One! May no heat touch the Blessed One! May no vexation by gadflies and gnats, by storms and sunheat and reptiles touch the Blessed One!"

And at the end of those seven days, when the Nāga king Mucalinda saw the open, cloudless sky, he loosened his windings from the body of the Blessed One, made his own appearance disappear, created the appearance of a youth, and stationed himself in front of the Blessed One, raising his clasped hands, and paying reverence to the Blessed One.

And the Blessed One, perceiving that, on this occasion, pronounced this solemn utterance: "Happy is the solitude of him who is full of joy, who has learnt the Truth, who sees the Truth. . . . Happy

> is freedom from lust in this world, getting beyond all desires; the putting away of that pride which comes from the thought 'I am!' This truly is the highest happiness!"2

This episode may seem incongruous to the Life of the Buddha story, but actually it is not. Mucalinda is, of course, a king cobra. *Nāgas*, or serpents, were respected, honored, and sometimes feared in India, well before the beginning of Buddhism.3 It is significant that Mucalinda is the first to encounter the newly enlightened Buddha and the first to recognize his holiness (see *Mahāvagga* text above). This great *nāga* acknowledges the Buddha to be his lord and thus the devotee coming to the young religion will be reassured and impressed. Yet, the Buddha benefits from the protection of this Titan, so that the grandeur of the *nāga* is not diminished.

Not only is the *nāga* protector of the Buddha, but also more generally of Buddhism and its holy places; the ancient nature cults developed a Buddhist context. At Ajantā, for example, the *nāgas* guard and lend their auspicious presence to the entrance of the caves (see Zimmer 1955, vol. 1, pl. 181). It is an unspoken understanding that these lords of the waters, trees, and rocks were here before the monument, but that they willingly lend their benign protection to this place.

The sojourn with Mucalinda was a fairly popular theme in early India art. A relief from Sāñcī, of slightly different iconography than that described in the *Mahāvagga* text given above, shows Mucalinda and his queens paying homage to the Bodhi tree (Marshall and Foucher, n.d., vol. 2, pl. LXV[*a*2]). Several reliefs from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa also depict it. The Buddha sits on the coils of the Nāga Mucalinda whose hood fans out above the meditating sage (Franz 1965, pl. 235). One of the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa reliefs shows Mucalinda changing into human form; the upper section of his body is human, though he retains the hood of multiple serpents, and his legs grow from the coils upon which the Buddha sits. He turns toward the Buddha, his hands folded in a gesture of respect (Longhurst 1938, pl. XXIII[*b*]).

The Mucalinda episode does not seem to have been popular in later Indian art, or in East Asian art, but it was of great importance in Southeast Asia. Many images of the Buddha on Mucalinda appear in Cambodian and Thai sculpture, especially from the twelfth through fourteenth centuries (Giteau 1965:110). One of the most beautiful of these is the "Buddha of Krahi" (pl. 41). It is interesting that, unlike most Mucalinda Buddha images, the Buddha is in the posture of touching the earth (*bhūmisparṣa mudrā*), rather than in meditation (*dhyana mudrā*). The earth-touching pose usually is associated with the Temptation; perhaps its usage here is meant

to call to mind for the viewer the whole sequence of events leading to the Buddha's Enlightenment and the enjoyment of that bliss while with Mucalinda.[4]

An interesting variant on the Mucalinda Buddha theme can be seen in certain Cambodian (Khmer) sculptures. Under the *devarājā* (god-king) cult, kingship in Cambodia included deification in the minds of the people and in the imagery of Khmer monuments. The Mucalinda Buddha was adapted to a new purpose: a Khmer king, identifiable by his crown and jewels, appears as a Buddha sheltered by the great Nāga Mucalinda (see Zimmer 1955, vol. 2, pl. 561).

The Mucalinda story in its numerous accounts does not have many variations.[5] One minor difference from the *Mahāvagga* account (quoted above) appears in the *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra* (pp. 12-13) in which the Buddha proceeds directly to the abode of Mucalinda upon leaving the Bodhi tree. Some accounts continue with the Buddha feeling doubt that the depth of the Truth which he had attained could be conveyed to others. At this, Sakra and Brahmā join with all the gods in entreating the Buddha to preach.[6] The Buddha grants their request and soon departs from where he had enjoyed in solitude the bliss of Enlightenment, to rejoin the five monks and preach his First Sermon.

NOTES

1. *Jinacarita*, Medhaṇkara, p. 51, v. 279.

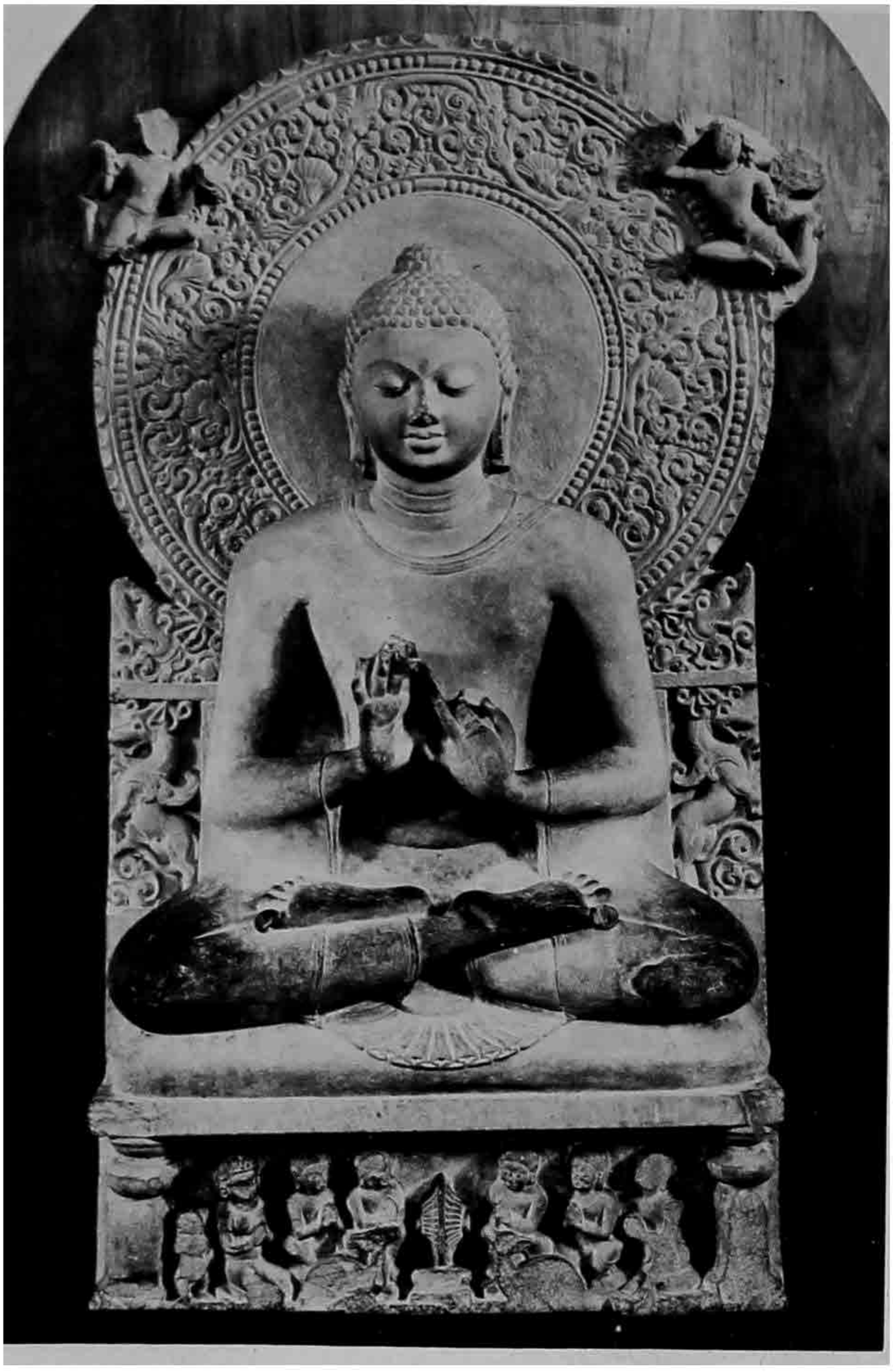
2. *Mahāvagga*, pp. 74, 79-81.

3. See William Crooke, "Serpent Worship (Indian)," in Hastings 1928[11]:411-19, esp. pp. 414-15.

4. Bowie (1960:67) suggests a similar theory.

5. For a comparison of the time sequence and verses in the Mucalinda accounts of the *Mahāvastu*, *Mahāvagga*, and *Lalitavistara*, see Jinananda 1957:254.

6. As in the *Nidānakathā* (p. 111). For visual examples, see Ingholt 1957, pls. 71, 72. Though the Mucalinda episode was not a popular subject in East Asia, there is a kind of parallel to be found in the Ch'an "Shaka Shussan" depictions (see "Austerities" episode above). When these paintings are interpreted as showing Śakyamuni following his Enlightenment, the somber expression signifies his regret that the Truth of Enlightenment (the covered hands signify the unexpressed, pure Truth) will not remain immaculate. It thus conveys the same doubt and reticence felt by the Buddha in the account following the stay with Mucalinda (see *Nidānakathā*, p. 111).



*"The Eightfold Path is the best of Paths; the Four Sayings are the best of Truths."*1

Pl. 42. The First Sermon. Sārnāth (Benares), India, late 5th cen. (chunar sandstone). Sārnāth Museum.

THE FIRST SERMON

Then the Blessed One thought: "To whom shall I preach the doctrine first? Who will understand this doctrine easily?" And the Blessed One thought: "The five Bhikṣus [Monks] have done many services to me; they attended on me during the time of my exertions to attain sanctification by undergoing austerities. What if I were to preach the doctrine first to the five Bhikṣus?"

Now the Blessed One thought: "Where do the five Bhikṣus dwell now?" And the Blessed One saw by the power of his divine, clear vision, surpassing that of men, that the five Bhikṣus were living at Benares, in the deer park Isipatana. And the Blessed One . . . went forth to Benares.

. . .

And the Blessed One thus addressed the five Bhikṣus: "There are two extremes, O Bhikṣus, which he who has given up the world ought to avoid. What are these two extremes? A life given to pleasures, devoted to pleasures and lusts: this is degrading, sensual, vulgar, ignoble, and profitless; and a life given to mortifications: this is painful, ignoble, and profitless. By avoiding these two extremes, O Bhikṣus, the Tathāgata has gained the knowledge of the Middle Path which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to the Sambodhi, to Nirvāṇa.[2]

"Which, O Bhikṣus, is this Middle Path, the knowledge of which the Tathāgata has gained. . . ? It is the holy eightfold Path, namely Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavor, Right Memory, Right Meditation. This, O Bhikṣus is the Middle Path, the knowledge of which the Tathāgata has gained, which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to the Sambodhi, to Nirvāṇa.

"This, O Bhikṣus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering: Birth is suffering; decay is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering. Presence of objects we hate is suffering; Separation from objects we love is suffering; not to obtain what we

desire is suffering. Briefly, the fivefold clinging to existence is suffering.

"This, O Bhikṣus is the Noble Truth of the Cause of suffering: Thirst, that leads to rebirth, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. This thirst is threefold, namely, thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity.

"This, O Bhiksus is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering: it ceases with the complete cessation of this thirst,--a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion,--with the abandoning of this thirst, with the doing away with it, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.

"This, O Bhiksus is the Noble Truth of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering: that holy eightfold Path, that is to say, Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavor, Right Memory, Right Meditation."

. . .

Thus the Blessed One spoke. The five Bhikṣus were delighted, and they rejoiced at the words of the Blessed One. . . .

And as the Blessed One had founded the Kingdom of Truth, by propounding the four Noble Truths [and the Eightfold Path] the earth-inhabiting devas shouted: "Truly the Blessed One has founded at Benares, in the deer park Isipatana, the highest kingdom of Truth, which may be opposed neither by a Samana nor by a Brahmana, neither by a deva, nor by Māra, nor by Brahmā, nor by any being in the world."[3]

These four Noble Truths of Suffering and the Eightfold Path taught by the Buddha seem straightforward enough. Indeed, in many ways they are unpretentious and simple, though adherence to them requires dedication and discipline. The Eightfold Path describes a whole way of life for the monk and layman devoted to Buddhism.

In another sermon on the Eightfold Path and Truths of Suffering, the Buddha emphasizes that he is not a savior, but a guide:

It is you who must put forth exertion;
the Tathāgatas are only guides;

> By meditation, those that enter upon this Path
> win release from the bondage of Māra.[4]

This self-reliance and emphasis upon meditation is a basic concept of early Hīnayāna Buddhism, though it also is important to many later schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The demanding, though satisfying, way of life presented in the Eightfold Path seems to have been formulated by the Buddha himself (Winternitz 1933[2]:2). The various texts describing the First Sermon are in close agreement with the *Mahāvagga* account quoted above.[5] The truths presented at the First Sermon, and at many subsequent sermons, were not the totality of insight achieved in Enlightenment, but were most adaptable to teaching and to guiding monks on their own paths to Enlightenment.

The First Sermon was regarded with the Birth, the Temptation, and the Parinirvāṇa (Death) of the Buddha as one of the Great Miracles. It was thus an important and favored theme in Buddhist imagery.

At Bhārhut, Sāñcī, and the Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa regions, the First Sermon was indicated by the Wheel of the Law atop the Buddha's throne (Cunningham 1879, pl. XXXIV, fig. 4; Marshall and Foucher, n.d., vol. 2, pl. LV[2]; Longhurst 1938, pl. XXIX). The doctrine is conceived of as radiating in all directions, like a spinning wheel. Gods, monks, and other listeners gather around as the Wheel of the Law radiates its message through the Buddha.

The First Sermon, as symbolized by the Wheel of the Law with a pair of deer below, was important in Thailand long after aniconic imagery died out in India. Several such pieces have been found in central Thailand, though they do not appear to have been popular elsewhere in Southeast Asia (Bowie 1972:35).

Aniconic imagery appears alongside iconic, anthropomorphic depictions in the Kushan period. The First Sermon is symbolized by the *triratna*, or three-pronged symbol of the three Buddhist jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma (Law), and the Community of believers.[6] At the First Sermon these three elements were brought together and the religion of Buddhism began.

In some Kushan sculptures from Gandhāra, the Buddha literally turns the Wheel of the Law, which sits atop the *triratna*. In other depictions, the *triratna* and Wheel appear on the base of the Buddha's throne; two deer flank the *triratna* and indicate the location of the First Sermon at the Deer Park (see Ingholt 1957, pl. 77; also see pl. 76).

One of the most famous images of the First Sermon was produced near the actual site of the Deer Park (pl. 42). The posture of the Buddha's hands as he preaches simulates the turning of the

Wheel of the Law. At the base are devotees grouped around the Wheel. This is a common iconography for images of this period (fifth century A.D.), appearing also at Ajantā. However, in Gandhāra, at Borobudur, and in some other Southeast Asian example the Buddha is shown with his arm raised as he relates the First Sermon to his earliest followers.[7]

NOTES

1. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, vol. 3, p. 149, "The Eightfold Path is the Best of Paths." Reprinted by permission of the Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

2. "Sambodhi" is a stage in the development of insight, wisdom, and assimilation of truth which culminates in Nirvāṇa, though both terms ("Sambodhi" and "Nirvāṇa") are used to signify Enlightenment. See Humphreys 1956:161, 170.

3. The *Mahāvagga*, pp. 90-97.

4. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, vol. 3, p. 149, "The Eightfold Path is the Best of Paths." Reprinted by permission of the Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

5. See, for example, the *Mahāvastu*, vol. 3, pp. 322-28; and *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*, pp. 24-27. The *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra* omits the Eightfold Path, and the *Lalitavistara* (Krom, pp. 224-28) differs significantly from the *Mahāvagga*, the *Mahāvastu*, and the *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*. The *Buddhacarita* has a number of similarities to the *Mahāvagga* and *Mahāvastu*, but includes a mixture of ideas from later Buddhism, as this section of the *Buddhacarita* was not written by Aśvaghoṣa (pp. 174-89, trans. Cowell).

6. See Ingholt 1957, pls. 76-79. For literature on the Three Jewels, see *Khuddakapāṭha*, pp. 4-6.

7. Yazdani 1930-1955(1), pt. 1 (plates), Cave 1, frontispiece; Ingholt 1957, pl. 76; Krom 1926, pl. 118; Frédéric 1965:40, pl. 29.

*The Lord entered a concentration of such a kind that he, his mind concentrated, disappeared from his own seat. Having risen up into the eastern sky [and southern, western and northern skies] he performed the four bodily attitudes (*īryāpatha*): he walked, stood, sat and lay down.*[1]

Pl. 43. The Multiplication. Ajantā Cave 1, India, late 5th cen. A.D. (wall painting, det.).

THE TWIN MIRACLE
(THE MIRACLE OF ŚRĀVASTĪ)

After the First Sermon, the Buddha wandered for many years throughout northern India, preaching, gathering disciples and making converts. There are many events connected with this period; the following episodes describe several of the most important from the years of his ministry. One of the most famous of these is the Twin Miracle,[2] or the Miracle of Śrāvastī:

> The Teacher created a jeweled walk in the air, one end of which rested upon the eastern rim of the world and the other upon the western rim. As the shadows of evening drew on, there assembled a multitude thirty-six leagues in extent. The Teacher, thinking to himself, "This is the time for me to perform the miracle," came forth from the Perfumed Chamber and stood on the terrace.
>
> . . .
>
> Now when the Teacher had [preached and related a series of] Jātakas, he came down the jeweled walk. His retinue extended twelve leagues before him to the east, twelve leagues behind him, twelve leagues on his left hand, and twelve leagues on his right. And standing erect in the midst of this numerous company extending twenty-four leagues in all directions, the Exalted One performed the Twin Miracle. According to the Sacred Text, the facts are to be understood as follows.[3]
>
> What is known regarding the Twin Miracle performed by the Tathāgata? On this occasion the Tathāgata performed the Twin Miracle, a miracle far more wonderful than any performed by his disciples. From the upper part of his body proceeded flames of fire, and from the lower part of his body a stream of water. From the lower part of his body proceeded flames of fire and from the upper part of his body a stream of water. From the front part of his body proceeded flames of fire, and from the back part of his body a stream of water. From the back part of his body proceeded flames of fire, and from the front part of his body a stream of water.
>
> Flames of fire and streams of water proceeded from his right and left eyes, from his right and

Pl. 44. The Great Miracle. Gandhāran, Pāitāvā, Afghanistan, c. 2nd cen. (stone). Musée Guimet, Paris.

left ears, from his right and left nostrils, from his right and left shoulders, from his right and left hands, from his right and left sides, from his right and left feet, from the tips of his fingers and from the roots of his fingers; from every pore of his body proceeded forth flames of fire, and from every pore of his body proceeded forth a stream of water. Six-colored were they: blue and yellow and red and white and pink and brilliant.[4] The Exalted One walked, and a counterpart of him stood or sat or lay down; . . . his counterpart lay down and the Exalted One walked or stood or sat. This is the tradition regarding the Twin Miracle performed by the Exalted One.

(This miracle, therefore, the Teacher performed as he walked up and down the jeweled walk. . . . The words "From the lower part of his body" and "From the upper part of his body" are used to show that from the same part of the body from which a stream of water proceeded, from that part also flames of fire proceeded, and that from the same part of the body from which flames of fire proceeded, from that part also a stream of water also proceeded. The same principle of interpenetration applies also to the following expressions. Now the flames of fire were not mingled with the stream of water, nor was the stream of water mingled with the flames of fire. . . .)

On that day the Teacher walked up and down performing his Twin Miracle, and as he did so, he preached the Law to the multitude from time to time, not wearying them with uninterrupted discourse, but giving them sufficient opportunity to refresh themselves from time to time. Thereupon the multitude sent up shouts of applause. Hearing the shouts of applause which proceeded from the multitude, the Teacher straightway looked into the hearts of the great multitude, and in sixteen ways perceived the disposition of mind of each one. So quick is the movement of the mind of the Buddhas, that in case any person took pleasure in any portion of the Law or in any miracle, the Buddha preached the Law and performed a miracle in accordance with the temper and disposition of every such person. As he thus preached the Law and performed miracles, a great multitude of living beings obtained clear comprehension of the Law.

Pl. 45. The Multiplication. Sārnāth, India, late 5th cen. A.D. (chunar sandstone). Sārnāth Museum.

> Since the Teacher saw in that vast throng none other than himself who understood his mind and could ask him questions, he put forth his supernatural power and created a double; the double then asked him questions and the Teacher answered them. While the Exalted One walked up and down, his double occupied himself otherwise. . . . Seeing the Teacher perform his miracle thus and hearing him preach the Law, two hundred millions of living beings in that vast throng obtained Comprehension of the Law.[5]

The Twin Miracle is, of course, to be distinguished from the Four Miracles of the Buddha's Birth, Temptation-Enlightenment, First Sermon, and Parinirvāṇa (Death). The latter mark the four most significant moments in the life of the Buddha, and, as such, emphasize his gifts to mankind. The Twin Miracle, or Miracle of Śrāvastī, has a very different quality. It seems to demand a literal interpretation, though the commentator utilizes it in a theological vein as well. Both the Four Miracles and the Twin Miracle are frequently met with in visual imagery, but, while the Four Miracles often occur together, the Twin Miracle generally is not combined with them.[6]

The Twin Miracle, or approximations of it, was performed by the Buddha on at least three occasions: at Gayā, where the Buddha gained Enlightenment, upon his return to Kapilavastu (next episode), and at Śrāvastī.[7] It is performed to dispel any doubts which may linger among men or gods as to his holiness and to conquer heretics and rivals. The above account from the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* specifically describes the Miracle of Śrāvastī, in which the Buddha vanquished his rivals and converted the multitude with his glorious miracle and preaching. It clearly arose to combat the claims of rival sects by illustrating the superior powers of the Buddha.

The Twin Miracle was a popular theme in Buddhist art, especially in India. An aniconic relief from Sāñcī depicts the jeweled walkway, below which are a group of worshipers. Behind them are three trees in full bloom, possibly signifying three duplicates of the Buddha in the duplication miracle (Marshall and Foucher, n.d., vol. 2, pl. XXXIV[*a*]). Another aniconic relief, from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and of a slightly later date than the Sāñcī example, depicts flames rising from behind the Buddha's throne (Ramachandran 1953, pls. VI[*a*], XIII[*d*]).

The flowing of fire and water and the multiplication of the Buddha are often not portrayed together. In Gandhāra, the streaming of fire and water, or the Great Miracle, is a common theme, perhaps having some relationship with the Iranian interest in fire

and light symbolism.[8] A famous Gandhāran relief from Pāitāvā, Afghanistan, depicts the Buddha performing this Great Miracle (pl. 44). His hand is raised, both in a gesture signifying reassurance (*abhāya mudrā*) and exposing the Wheel of the Law which he is preaching to the multitude. Two smaller Buddha figures appear at his left and right, each with streaming water and flames rising from their shoulders. This would seem to be a reference to the multiplication, or lesser miracle, though in most depictions the duplicate Buddhas are not shown also performing the Great Miracle.

In fifth-century Indian art, it is the multiplication aspect of the Twin Miracle which is favored. It is painted or carved in several Ajantā caves, usually according to conventionalized compositional formulas (pl. 43). Surrounding a larger centralized Buddha are a multitude of duplicates in various poses of preaching and discoursing. The same basic composition was popular also in contemporary reliefs of Sārnāth (pl. 45).

The multiplication miracle appears also in Southeast Asian art. One Thai example from the seventh or eighth century shows the Buddha surrounded by a crowd of royal skeptics, rivals, and believers (Bowie 1960:45-46 and fig. 17). Above this are many Buddhas, radiating around the central Buddha, who is the source of the duplicates.

NOTES

1. The *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*, pp. 72-73. Reprinted by permission of E. J. Brill, Leiden.

2. The Twin Miracle is sometimes also called the Miracle of Pairs (*yamakapāṭihāriya*). See Thomas 1927:98-99, n. 2.

3. Note that the commentator has introduced the Twin Miracle by his first two paragraphs and adds an interpretation following the canonical, or "sacred text" account. He thus distinguishes between his own and the traditional, canonical account. It is interesting that the multiplication miracle is only briefly mentioned in the main body of the "sacred text" account, but expanded in the following section, which may not have been part of the canonical original. This may bear some relation to the fact that in earlier depictions the multiplication miracle is rarely seen, while it became a great favorite in the fifth century, when the *Dhammapada* (*Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*) was written. (Burlingame places the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* at c. 450 A.D. [*Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 57].)

4. Note the reference to six-colored rays; see also the Ṣaḍdanta Jātaka in Part One of this volume.

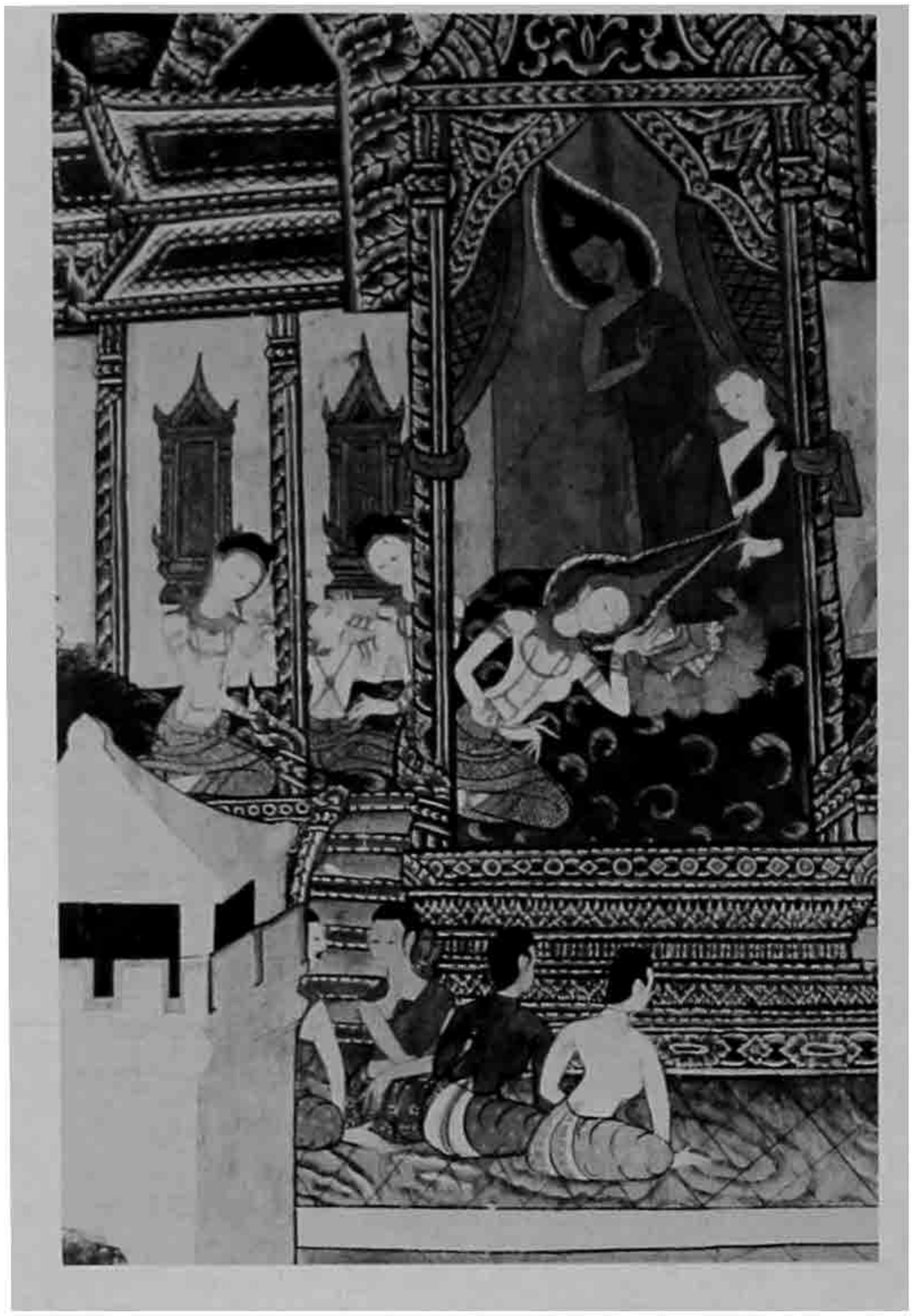
5. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, vol. 3, pp. 42-47. Reprinted courtesy of the Harvard University Press, Cambridge. The "Twin Miracle" section comprises pages 35-56 of volume 3.

6. There are notable exceptions. A fragment from Pāitāvā, very similar in style to plate 44 in this volume, shows the Austerities-Meditation and Temptation-Enlightenment, plus other unidentifiable fragments, next to the central Buddha with flames and water streaming from his shoulders (Rowland 1970, pl. 68). It thus differs from its closely contemporary relief (pl. 44) which, in place of the Buddha engaged in Austerities-Meditation and the Temptation-Enlightenment, shows duplicates of the central Buddha with flames and water streaming from their shoulders.

   Another exception is to be seen in a fifth-century relief from Sārnāth (see Foucher 1917*a*, pl. XIX[1]). This stele depicts the Four Miracles at the top and bottom of the relief, with four other popular (though in other traditions, minor) episodes between. The multiplication miracle is one of these.

7. The *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra* (pp. 72-73) describes the miracle at Gayā in the same terms as the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* Śrāvastī miracle. The *Nidānakathā* (p. 123) identifies the Kapilavastu miracle as "like unto that double miracle at the foot of the Gaṇḍamba-tree [the mango at Śrāvastī]." The Twin miracle appears also in the *Mahāvastu*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, and the *Divyāvadāna* (Thomas 1927:98-99, n. 2; and Williams 1975:183).

8. See Foucher 1917*a*, pl. XXVI(1,2). The Gandhāran interest in light and fire symbolism is also evident in another favorite Gandhāran theme, that of the visit of Sakra (Indra) to the Buddha in the Indraśailaguha Cave (see Soper 1949).



Wandering from place to place [the Buddha at last reached] Kapilavastu. . . .
Then the young princess, who was the mother of Rāhula, said to young Rāhula: "This is your father, Rāhula; go and ask him for your inheritance."[1]

Pl. 46. The Return to Kapilavastu: Rāhula Presented to the Buddha. Wat Khanǭnnụa, Ayutthayā, Thailand, c. 19th cen. (wall painting).

THE RETURN TO KAPILAVASTU

For at a certain time the Teacher made his first journey [back] to the city Kapilavastu, and when he arrived there, his kinsmen came forth to meet him and to greet him. On that occasion, in order to break the overweening pride of his kinsfolk, he created by supernatural power a cloister of jewels in mid-air, and in this cloister walked up and down preaching the Law.[2] The hearts of his kinsfolk were straightaway endowed with faith, and beginning with the great king Śuddhodana, all did reverence to him. . . .

On the following day . . . the Teacher entered the city to receive alms. . . . The king went quickly out of his residence, adjusting his cloak as he went, and prostrating himself before the Teacher, said, "Son, why do you mortify me? I am overwhelmed with shame to see you going from house to house receiving alms. In this very city it would be improper for you to go from house to house in a golden litter receiving alms. Why do you put me to shame?" "Great king, I am not putting you to shame; I am merely keeping up the tradition of my lineage." "But, my dear son, is it a tradition of my lineage to gain a livelihood by going from house to house receiving alms?" "No, great king, that is not a tradition of your lineage. But it is a tradition of my lineage, for countless thousands of Buddhas have gone from house to house receiving alms, and have so gained their sustenance." So saying, he preached the Law. . . .

At the conclusion of the lesson the king was established in the Fruit of Conversion; the assembled company also profited by the lesson.[3]

* * *

On the seventh day [of his stay in Kapilavastu] the Mother of Rāhula adorned Prince Rāhula and sent him to the Exalted One, saying, "Dear son, go look upon this monk, possessed of a retinue of twenty thousand monks, possessed of a body of the hue of gold, possessed of the beauty of form of Mahā Brahmā.[4] This monk is your father. To him once belonged great stores of treasure. From the time of his Great Retirement we have not seen

Pl. 47. Rāhula Presented to the Buddha. Ajantā Cave 17, India, late 5th cen. (wall painting, det.).

him. Ask him for this your inheritance, saying, 'Dear father, I am a royal prince, and so soon as I shall receive the ceremonial sprinkling, I shall become a Universal Monarch. I have need of wealth; bestow wealth upon me; for to a son belongs the wealth which formerly belonged to his father.'"

Accordingly Prince Rāhula went to the Exalted One. The moment he saw him he conceived a warm affection for his father and his heart rejoiced within him. And he said, "Monk, pleasant is your shadow," and said much else befitting his own station. When the Exalted One had finished his meal, he pronounced the words of thanksgiving, arose from his seat, and departed. Prince Rāhula followed in the footsteps of the Exalted One, saying, "Monk, give me my inheritance; monk, give me my inheritance." The Exalted One did not repel the Prince; even the attendants were unable to prevent the Prince from accompanying the Exalted One. In this manner the Prince accompanied the Exalted One to the Grove. Then the thought occurred to the Exalted One, "The paternal inheritance which this youth seeks inevitably brings destruction in its train. Behold, I will bestow upon him the Sevenfold Noble Inheritance which I received at the foot of the Bo [Bodhi] tree; I will make him master of an inheritance which transcends the world."

Therefore the Exalted One addressed Venerable Sāriputra [his disciple], "Well, then, Sāriputra, make a monk of Prince Rāhula." When, however, Prince Rāhula had been received into the Order, the king his grandfather was afflicted with great sorrow. Unable to endure his sorrow, he made known his sorrow to the Exalted One and made the following request of him, "It were well, Reverend Sir, did the noble monks not receive into the Order any youth without the permission of his mother and father." The Exalted One granted him this request.[5]

The Return to Kapilavastu appears in various texts and monuments. It serves both to convince the dubious elders of the Buddha's eminence and, by his decision regarding Rāhula, to establish a fundamental monastic rule concerning ordination of a monk.[6] It thus has a strongly historical, biographical quality. The reunion with his bewildered, but respectful father, the son who has never known him, and the wife whom he left long ago, also has an

emotional resonance. This emotional quality is conveyed in the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* passage given above and in depictions such as that from Ayutthayā, Thailand (pl. 46).

It is generally the meeting with the Buddha's family, rather than the miracle, which is chosen in art to portray the Return to Kapilavastu. At Sāñcī, the king stands with folded hands before the seat of the Buddha (Marshall and Foucher, n.d., vol. 2, pl. XXXVI[c]). This could follow various traditions on Śuddhodana's meeting with his son; in the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* (vol. 3, pp. 2-4) and the *Nidānakathā* (p. 123) the king feels distressed by the begging for alms, but later becomes aware of the Buddha's purpose. Also, an entire text exists on the Buddha's replies to a series of questions raised by Śuddhodana on death and karma.[7] In each of these encounters and versions, Śuddhodana perhaps symbolizes the old order and authority which has much to learn from the new religion of the Buddha.

The Return to Kapilavastu texts often do not include both the meeting with the king and the meeting with the wife and son.[8] It is thus not surprising that in visual depictions, it is generally one or the other which is chosen, but not both.[9] It is a standard theme in Thai chapel paintings on the life of the Buddha and appears also as a wall painting in Ajantā Cave 17 (pl. 47). Its popularity in part is due to the fact that, like the text on Śuddhodana's questions to the Buddha, there is an interesting body of poems on Rāhula.[10] In these poems we learn that Rāhula eventually did become a monk, and thus in a sense represents the continuation of the tradition and lineage.[11]

NOTES

1. The *Mahāvagga*, p. 208.

2. Note that this account mentions only the creation of a jeweled walk; the *Nidānakathā* (p. 123) specifically likens the miracle to that performed at Śrāvastī.

3. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, vol. 3, pp. 2-4. Reprinted by permission of the Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

4. "Mahā Brahmā" refers to the "Great" Brahmā, Creator of the Universe.

5. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, pp. 219-20. Reprinted by permission of the Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

6. As part of the Vinaya texts, on the admission to the order of monks, the *Mahāvagga* account (pp. 207-210) serves as a monastic rule set down by the Buddha himself.

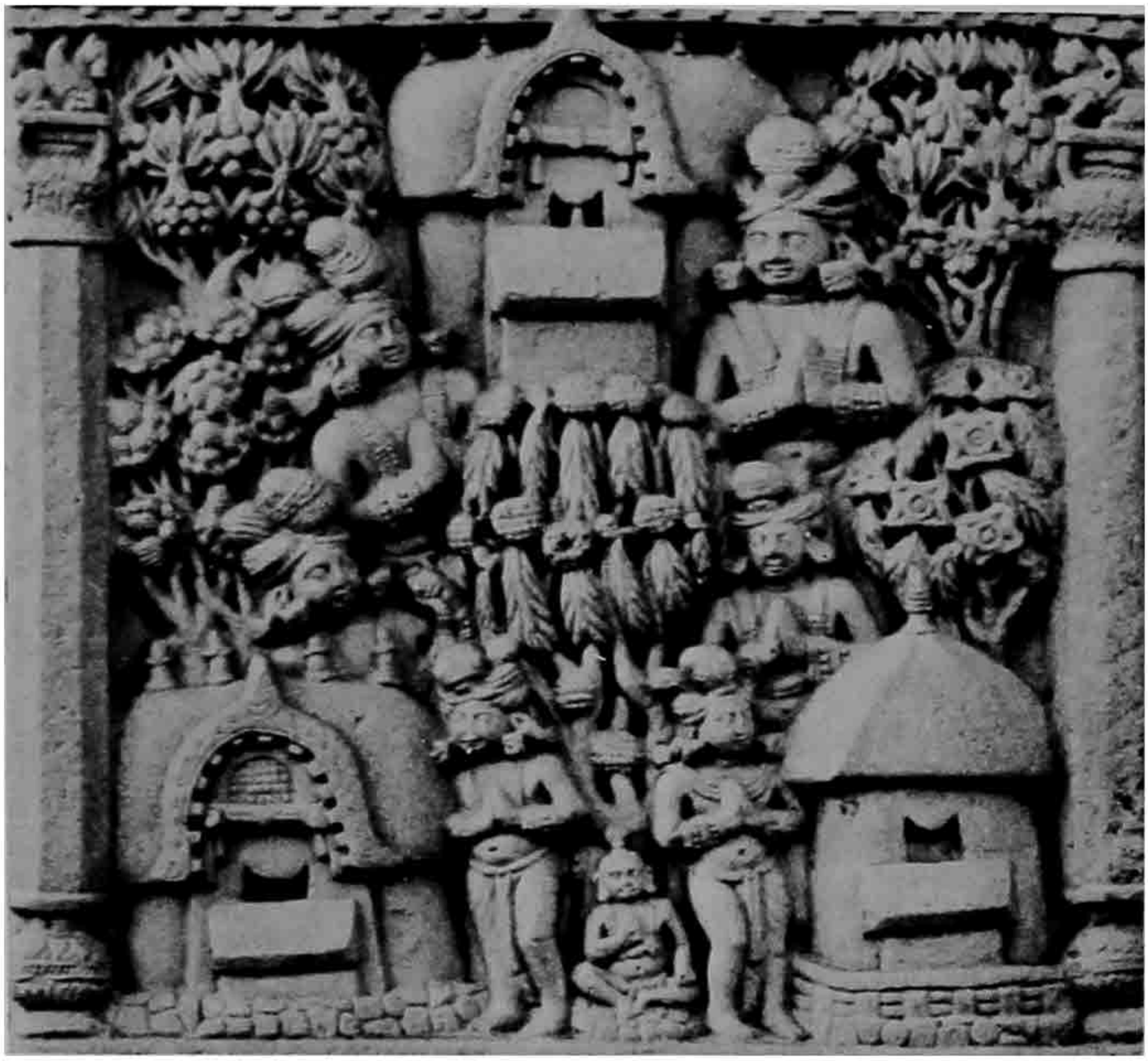
7. *Ayuṣpattiyathākāraparipṛcchā* sūtra (*Encyclopedia of Buddhism* 1961-1972, vol. 2, p. 482).

8. An exception to this is the *Nidānakathā* (pp. 123-28).

9. An exception in visual examples is to be seen at Nālaṇḍā, India. See Zimmer 1955, vol. 2, pl. 377.

10. For examples, see *Theragāthā*, p. 183; and "*Râhulasutta* [*Rāhulasūtra*]," in *Dhammapada*, Müller, pp. 55-56.

11. There may be conflicting traditions or inconsistencies which would account for this: that Rāhula remained with his grandfather and/or became a monk.



For the Conqueror's [monks] the merchant had made a spacious abode, the fair and noble monastery called Jetavana. . . .

Thus the Blessed One . . . the sage all-wise, having from the time he became Buddha made no fixed abode, but making pilgrimage, his body shining with six-colored rays, for the rest of the time [of his ministry] five-and-twenty years, made his abode in Śrāvastī and Jetavana, noble and beautiful, incomparably fair, and adorned like an abode of the gods.[1]

Pl. 48. The Donation of the First Monastery at Jetavana. Stūpa 1 (Great Stūpa), Sāñcī, India, c. 1st cen. B.C. (sandstone).

THE DONATION OF THE FIRST MONASTERY

At that time the householder Anāthapiṇḍika . . . gave a great donation to the Order, with the Buddha at their head, and received a promise from the Teacher that he would come to Śrāvastī.

Then along the road, forty-five leagues in length, he built resting places at every league, at an expenditure of a hundred thousand for each. And he bought the Grove called Jetavana for eighteen *koṭi*s of gold pieces, laying them side by side over the ground, and erected there a new building. In the midst thereof he made a pleasant room for the Sage, and around it separately constructed dwellings for the eighty Elders, and other residences with single and double walls, and long halls and open roofs, ornamented with ducks and quails; and ponds also he made, and terraces to walk on by day and by night.

. . .

The Blessed One then . . . entered the Jetavana monastery with the infinite grace and unequalled majesty of a Buddha, making the spaces of the grove bright with the halo from his person, as if they were sprinkled with gold dust.

Then Anāthapiṇḍika asked him, "How, my Lord, shall I deal with this Vihāra?"[2]

"O householder," was the reply, "give it then to the Order of Mendicants, whether now present or hereafter to arrive."

And the great merchant, saying, "So be it, my Lord," brought a golden vessel, and poured water over the hand of the Sage, and dedicated the Vihāra, saying, "I give this Jetavana Vihāra to the Order of Mendicants with the Buddha at their head, and to all from every direction now present or hereafter to come."[3]

And the Master accepted the Vihāra, and giving thanks, pointed out the advantages of monasteries, saying,--

> Cold they ward off, and heat;
> So also beasts of prey,
> And creeping things, and gnats,
> And rains in the cold season.

And when the dreaded heat and winds
Arise, they ward them off.

To give to monks a dwelling-place,
Wherein in safety and in peace
To think till mysteries grow clear,
The Buddha calls a worthy deed.

Let therefore a wise man,
Regarding his own weal,
Have pleasant monasteries built,
And lodge there learned men.

Let him with cheerful mien
Give food to them, and drink,
And clothes, and dwelling-places
To the upright in mind.

Then they shall preach to him the Truth,--
The Truth, dispelling every grief,--
Which Truth, when here a man receives,
He sins no more, and dies away![4]

The Jetavana Donation immediately follows the Return to Kapilavastu in the *Nidānakathā* account given above; in the *Jinacarita* (pl. 48, above) it also occurs fairly late in the career of the Buddha. Actually, the use of fixed residences of some kind must have been very early, as no travelling was possible during the months of the rainy season (Thomas 1927:107). But whether such early residences had the permanency, size and impressiveness which the Jetavana Monastery is said to have had, is another question. At any rate, the Jetavana Donation became symbolic as the first monastery, and Anāthapiṇḍika the model for generosity in the layman. It was thus an important subject in early Buddhist monuments.

The gift of the Jetavana Grove appears at Bhārhut, Bodhgayā, and Sāñcī. Great stress is laid upon the generosity of Anāthapiṇḍika, who covered the entire ground with gold to meet the price of the seller, Prince Jeta (*Nidānakathā* above, and the *Cullavagga* account from the Vinaya) (Ñāṇamoli 1972:89-91). At Bhārhut (Cunningham 1879, pl. XXVIII[3]) and Bodhgayā (Cunningham 1892, pl. VIII[11]), workers are shown laying pieces of gold side by side on the ground. At Sāñcī, the golden ground is shown in front of the residences built by Anāthapiṇḍika (pl. 48). Two large figures appear in the upper section of the relief, probably representing Anāthapiṇḍika and Prince Jeta (Marshall and Foucher, n.d., vol. 2, page opp. pl. XXXIV[*a*]). A Gandhāran relief from Peshawar depicts Anāthapiṇḍika with a group of merchants before the Buddha (Ingholt 1957, pl. 95). He pours water over the hands of the Buddha in this relief, and also in the Bhārhut relief, to symbolize the presentation of the monastery.

In the *Vinaya Pitaka*, that ancient section of the Pāli Canon which concerns the monastic community, we are told in the Jetavana account that the Buddha had until that time forbidden established dwellings for his followers (Ñāṇamoli 1972:89). With the founding of a monastery, the institutionalization of a religion is begun. The monastery becomes a place for study by "learned men" (*Nidānakathā* above) to preserve and enlarge upon the original teachings of the Buddha after his death. Thus, the Buddha's consent to a shift from a wandering existence to the permanency of monasteries marks his realization of his own death to come and the need to institutionalize the religion which he began.

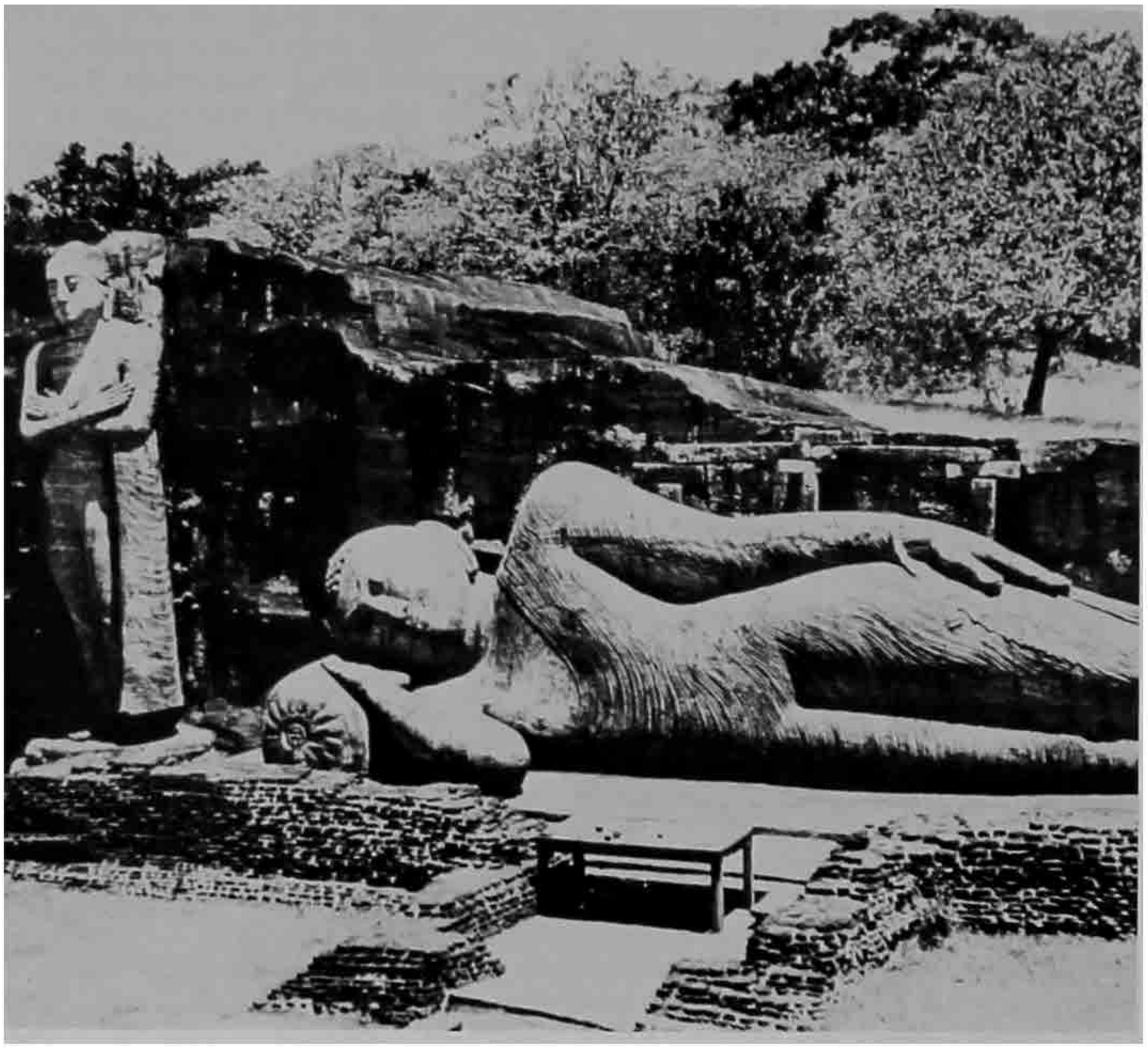
NOTES

1. *Jinacarita*, Medhaṇkara, p. 61, v. 419; p. 64, vv. 455-56.

2. A vihāra is a monastic retreat for use in the rainy season, or for a permanent residence by monks.

3. T. W. Rhys Davids notes that this formula has been frequently inscribed over cave dwellings of Buddhists in India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka); see *Nidānakathā* (p. 131, n. 1).

4. *Nidānakathā*, pp. 130-32.



Now the Exalted One went . . . to the foot of a certain tree; and when he had come there he addressed [his faithful disciple] the Venerable Ānanda, and said:--"Fold, I pray you, Ānanda, the robe in four; and spread it out for me. I am weary Ānanda, and must rest awhile!"[1]

Pl. 49. Ānanda Attending the Parinirvāṇa of the Buddha. Gal Vihāra, Polonnāruva, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), 12th cen. (granulite).

THE PARINIRVĀṆA: DEATH OF THE BUDDHA

Then the Exalted One proceeded, with a great company of the brethren, to Beluva, and there the Exalted One stayed in the village itself.

Now the Exalted One there addressed the brethren, and said:--"O mendicants, do you take up your abode round about Vesālī, each according to the place where his friends, acquaintances, and intimates may live, for the retreat in the rainy season. I shall enter upon the rainy season here at Beluva."2

"So be it, lord!" said those brethren, in assent, to the Exalted One. And they entered upon the rainy season round about Vesālī, each according to the place where his friends, acquaintances, and intimates lived, whilst the Exalted One stayed even there at Beluva.

Now when the Exalted One had thus entered upon the rainy season, there fell upon him a dire sickness, and sharp pains came upon him, even unto death. But the Exalted One, mindful and self-possessed, bore them without complaint.

Then this thought occurred to the Exalted One:--"It would not be right for me to pass away without addressing the disciples, without taking leave of the Order. Let me now, by a strong effort of the will, bend this sickness down again, and keep my hold on life till the allotted time be come."

. . .

Now very soon after the Buddha began to recover. And when he had quite got rid of the sickness, he came out from his lodging, and sat down in the shadow thereof on a seat spread out there. And the venerable Ānanda went to the place where the Exalted One was, and saluted him, and took a seat respectfully on one side, and addressed the Exalted One, and said:--"I have beheld, lord, how the Exalted One was in health, and I have beheld how the Exalted One had to suffer. And though at the sight of the sickness of the Exalted One my body became weak as a creeper, and the horizon became dim to me, and my faculties were no longer clear, yet notwithstanding I took some little comfort

from the thought that the Exalted One would not pass away until at least he had left instructions as touching the Order."

"What, then, Ānanda? Does the Order expect that of me? I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back. Surely, Ānanda, should there be any one who harbors the thought, 'It is I who will lead the brotherhood', or, 'The Order is dependent upon me', it is he who should lay down instructions in any manner concerning the Order. Now the Tathāgata, Ānanda, thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the Order is dependent upon him. Why then should he leave instructions in any manner concerning the Order? I too, O Ānanda, am now grown old, and full of years, my journey is drawing to its close, I have reached my sum of days, I am turning eighty years of age; and just as a worn-out cart, Ānanda, can be kept going only with the help of thongs, so, methinks, the body of the Tathāgata can only be kept going by bandaging it up. It is only, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata, by ceasing to attend to any outward thing, becomes plunged by the cessation of any separate sensation in that concentration of heart which is concerned with no material object--it is only then that the body of the Tathāgata is at ease.

"Therefore, O Ānanda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the Truth. . . .

. . .

"But now, Ānanda, have I not formerly declared to you that it is in the very nature of all things, near and dear unto us, that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them? How, then, Ānanda, can this be possible [for me to remain long]--whereas anything whatever born, brought into being, and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution--how then can this be possible that such a being should not be dissolved? No such condition can exist! . . . At the end of three months from this time the Tathāgata will die! . . ."

. . .

Now Chunda, the worker in metals, heard that the Exalted One had come to [his village] and was staying there in his Mango Grove.

And Chunda, the worker in metals, went to the place where the Exalted One was, and saluting him took his seat respectfully on one side. And when he was thus seated, the Exalted One instructed, aroused, incited, and gladdened him with religious discourse.

Then he . . . said:--"May the Exalted One do me the honor of taking his meal together with the brethren, at my house tomorrow?"

And the Exalted One signified, by silence, his consent.

. . .

Now when the Exalted One had eaten the rice prepared by Chunda, the worker in metals, there fell upon him a dire sickness, the disease of dysentery, and sharp pain came upon him, even unto death. But the Exalted One, mindful and self-possessed, bore it without complaint.

And the Exalted One addressed the venerable Ānanda, and said:--"Come, Ānanda, let us go on to Kusinagara."

"Even so, lord!" said the venerable Ānanda, in assent to the Exalted One.

. . .

And the Exalted One proceeded with a great company of the brethren to the Sāla Grove of the Mallas, the Upavattana of Kusinagara, on the further side of the river Hiranyavatī: and when he had come there he addressed the venerable Ānanda, and said:--

"Spread over me, I pray you, Ānanda, [the robe, as I lay on] the couch with its head to the north, between the twin Sāla trees. I am weary, Ānanda, and would lie down."

"Even so, lord!" said the venerable Ānanda, in assent to the Exalted One. And he spread a covering over the couch with its head to the north, between the twin Sāla trees. And the Exalted One laid himself down on his right side, with one leg resting on the other, and he was mindful and self-possessed.

. . .

Now the venerable Ānanda went into the Vihāra and stood leaning against the lintel of the door, and weeping at the thought:--"Alas! I remain still but a learner, one who has yet to work out his own perfection.[3] And the Master is about to pass away from me--he who is so kind!"

. . .

And the Exalted One called a certain brother and said:--"Go now, brother, and call Ānanda in my name, and say:--'Brother Ānanda, the Master calls for thee.'"

"Even so, lord!" said that brother in assent to the Exalted One. And he went up to the place where the Exalted One was: and when he had come there, he said to the venerable Ānanda:--"Brother Ānanda, the Master calls for thee."

"Very well, brother," said the venerable Ānanda in assent to that brother. And he went up to the place where the Exalted One was and when he had come there he bowed down before the Exalted One, and took his seat respectfully on one side.

Then the Exalted One said to the venerable Ānanda, as he sat there by his side:--"Enough, Ānanda! Do not let yourself be troubled; do not weep! Have I not already, on former occasions, told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear unto us that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them? . . . For a long time, Ānanda, have you been very near to me by thoughts of love, kind and good, that never varies, and is beyond measure. You have done well, Ānanda! Be earnest in effort, and you too shall soon be free from the Intoxications!"

. . .

Then the Exalted One addressed the brethren, and said:--"It may be, brethren, that there may be doubt or misgiving in the mind of some brother as to the Buddha, or the doctrine, or the path or the method. Inquire, brethren, freely. Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought:--'Our teacher was face to face with us, and we could not bring ourselves to inquire of the Exalted One when were face to face with him.'"

And when he had thus spoken the brethren were silent.

. . .

Then the Exalted One addressed the brethren and said:--"It may be, brethren, that you put no questions out of reverence for the teacher. Let one friend communicate to another."

And when he had thus spoken the brethren were silent.

And the venerable Ānanda said to the Exalted One:--"How wonderful a thing is it, lord, and how marvelous! Verily, I believe that in this whole assembly of the brethren there is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha, or the doctrine, or the path, or the method!"

"It is out of the fullness of faith that thou hast spoken, Ānanda! But, Ānanda, the Tathāgata knows for certain that in this whole assembly of the brethren there is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha, or the doctrine, or the path, or the method! . . ."

Then the Exalted One addressed the brethren, and said: "Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying:--'Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence!'"

This was the last word of the Tathāgata!

Then the Exalted One entered into the first stage of Rapture. And rising out of the first stage he passed into the second. And rising out of the second he passed into the third. And rising out of the third stage he passed into the fourth. And rising out of the fourth stage of Rapture, he entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of space is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of space he entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of thought is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of thought he entered into a state of mind to which nothing at all was specially present. And passing out of the consciousness of no special object he fell into a state between consciousness and unconsciousness. And passing out of the state between consciousness and unconsiousness he fell into a state in which the consciousness both of sensations and of ideas had wholly passed away.

. . .

Then the Exalted One passing out of the state in which both sensations and ideas have ceased to be, entered into the state between consciousness and unconsciousness. And passing out of the state between consciousness and unconsciousness he entered into the state of mind to which nothing at all is specially present. And passing out of the consciousness of no special object he entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of thought is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of thought he entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of space is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of space he entered into the fourth stage of Rapture. And passing out of the fourth stage he entered into the third. And passing out of the third stage he entered into the second. And passing out of the second he entered into the first. And passing out of the first stage of Rapture he entered into the second. And passing out of the second stage he entered into the third. And passing out of the third stage he entered into the fourth stage of Rapture. And passing out of the last stage of Rapture he immediately expired.

When the Exalted One died, there arose, at the moment of his passing out of existence, a mighty earthquake, terrible and awe-inspiring: and the thunders of heaven burst forth.

. . .

When the Exalted One died, the venerable Ānanda, at the moment of his passing away from existence, uttered this stanza:--

> "Then was there terror!
> Then stood the hair on end!
> When he endowed with every grace--
> The supreme Buddha--died!"[4]

The complete acceptance by the Buddha of the naturalness of death permeates this account from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*.[5] The terrors of decay, disease, and death which initially led the young Siddhartha to leave his princely life are calmly accepted by the Buddha. The account also recognizes the fact that even the most perfect Enlightenment could never be permanent nor completely free of obstacles so long as the individual was encased within the human body. Thus, the mind-states into which the Buddha ascends and descends as he dies are described in detail,

completing as they do the original Enlightenment, or Nirvāṇa, attained under the Bodhi tree.

Freedom from the physical body theoretically offered the highest form of purification and liberation, although it was never a goal encouraged by the Buddha, and was even further disparaged in later Mahāyāna Buddhist practice, which stressed active participation in the world for the benefit of others. But the devotional import of the Parinirvāṇa as a seeming-state after death provided a form of veneration and the necessary ground for future individual hope, which culminated in such Mahāyānist schools as Amidism (Matsunaga and Matsunaga 1976[2]:38).

The Parinirvāṇa and Nirvāṇa liturgy was of great importance to Buddhists. The Parinirvāṇa text most widely used throughout the Buddhist world was the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*.[6] It is a lengthy and variegated collection of dialogues between the Buddha and various disciples, particularly Ānanda.[7] It served as a kind of resume on the essential teachings and precepts, and was a widely used sūtra in both Hīnayānist and Mahāyānist schools (Matsunaga and Matsunaga 1976[2]:152).

The Parinirvāṇa, like other scenes from the life of the Buddha, was first represented in visual imagery in aniconic form. A group of figures surrounds a stūpa, one of a series of burial mounds enshrining the relics of the Buddha, which in themselves stand for the departed Buddha (see, for examples, Marshall and Foucher, n.d., vol. 2, pls. XII[5], XXXVI[*c*]). The Parinirvāna was a frequent subject in art from all Buddhist countries, and was often depicted on a monumental scale. There are several reasons for this, including the grandeur implicit in the subject itself, and the fact that great crowds gathered for Nirvāṇa liturgies and preachings and a large image was needed for visibility.

One such monumental depiction is sculpted in Ajantā Cave 26. The Buddha's followers kneel at the base of his couch, extending in a long frieze along the length of the cave's wall. The presence of the dying Buddha, seen in the dim light and quiet of the cave is an impressive sight (Zimmer 1955, vol. 2, pls. 184-85).

Another very impressive and memorable colossal Parinirvāṇa scene is at the Gal Vihāra in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) (pl. 49). In this beautiful work, carved from the living rock and set in the forest, it is simply Ānanda who attends the dying Buddha.

The colossal Parinirvāṇa is also to be found in East Asia. One sculpture survives from about the sixth century at Tun-Huang, and another from Wo-fu-ssu, dated 1469 (Munsterberg 1967:36). Many Japanese paintings of the Parinirvāṇa are also monumental, being designed for viewing by a large congregation (Murase 1975: 64).

Pl. 50. The Parinirvāṇa or "Reclining Buddha," Ayutthayā style. c. 18th cen. (bronze). National Museum, Bangkok.

Records from the T'ang dynasty (618-909) refer to many interior wall paintings of the Parinirvāṇa, but, except for various examples in Central Asian and Tun-Huang caves, the T'ang works have perished. The Parinirvāṇa was also frequently depicted as one of the eight major events in the life of the Buddha, the others being the Conception, Birth, Great Departure, Austerities, Temptation, Enlightenment, and First Sermon (Murase 1975:62).

A sculptural group in the Hōryū-ji Pagoda ("Gojū-no-tō"), dating from c. 710, is the earliest extant Japanese example of the Parinirvāṇa ("Nehan") (Shoten 1969*a*, vol. 1, pls. 68-70). The Buddha is surrounded by his followers, who wail and writhe in agony at his death. All the figures except the Buddha are in painted clay. The bronze Buddha probably follows the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* text, which describes the skin of the Buddha as becoming clear and bright, both during his Enlightenment and at the Parinirvāṇa; the lamenting figures also follow the textual description (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids, pp. 145-46, 177). This basic iconography appears in all of the many Japanese depictions of the Parinirvāṇa.[8]

The Parinirvāṇa was very important in Buddhism, but, paradoxically, it was also denied by some Buddhists. In certain periods in Southeast Asia, the thought that the Buddha could die was too abhorrent and terrifying to be accepted. Parinirvāṇa images came to be interpreted as simply the Buddha "resting" or "reclining" (pl. 50).[9] One is reminded not only of the very human need for the eternal but of Ānanda's words at the moment of the Buddha's death:

> Then was there terror!
> Then stood the hair on end!
> When he endowed with every grace--
> The Supreme Buddha--died![10]

NOTES

1. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids, p. 139. Reprinted by permission of the Oxford University Press, Oxford.

2. Note that in this account it is still common for the Buddha and his followers to disperse for the rainy season, rather than living communally in a monastery such as Jetavana.

3. There perhaps was some hut or cottage in the Grove which is here called a vihāra. See *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids, pp. 156-57, n. 2.

4. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids, pp. 105-77. Reprinted by permission of the Oxford University Press, Oxford.

5. There are, however, other passages in which the Buddha makes it clear that he could live for an aeon if he so chose, but will not, since Ānanda missed his cue to beg him to remain alive (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids, pp. 110-13). These sections are almost surely later than those in which the Buddha accepts his old age and the inevitability of death.

6. Several recensions of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* are found in Chinese, and several of these spread also into Japan. See Mukherji 1931:133-34; *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King*, p. 365, n. 3; and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Yamamoto.

7. Ānanda was a first cousin of the Buddha, and a favorite disciple and friend. He is said to have been an important figure in formulating the Buddhist Canon after the death of the Buddha (Fa Hsien 1886:33, n. 2).

8. Compare Lee 1967?, color pl. 28 (Koyasan, 1086 A.D.) with Murase 1975, pl. opp. p. 62 (mid-fourteenth century).

9. I am indebted to Forrest McGill for this information. See also, Bowie 1972:191.

10. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids, p. 177. Reprinted by permission of the Oxford University Press, Oxford.

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